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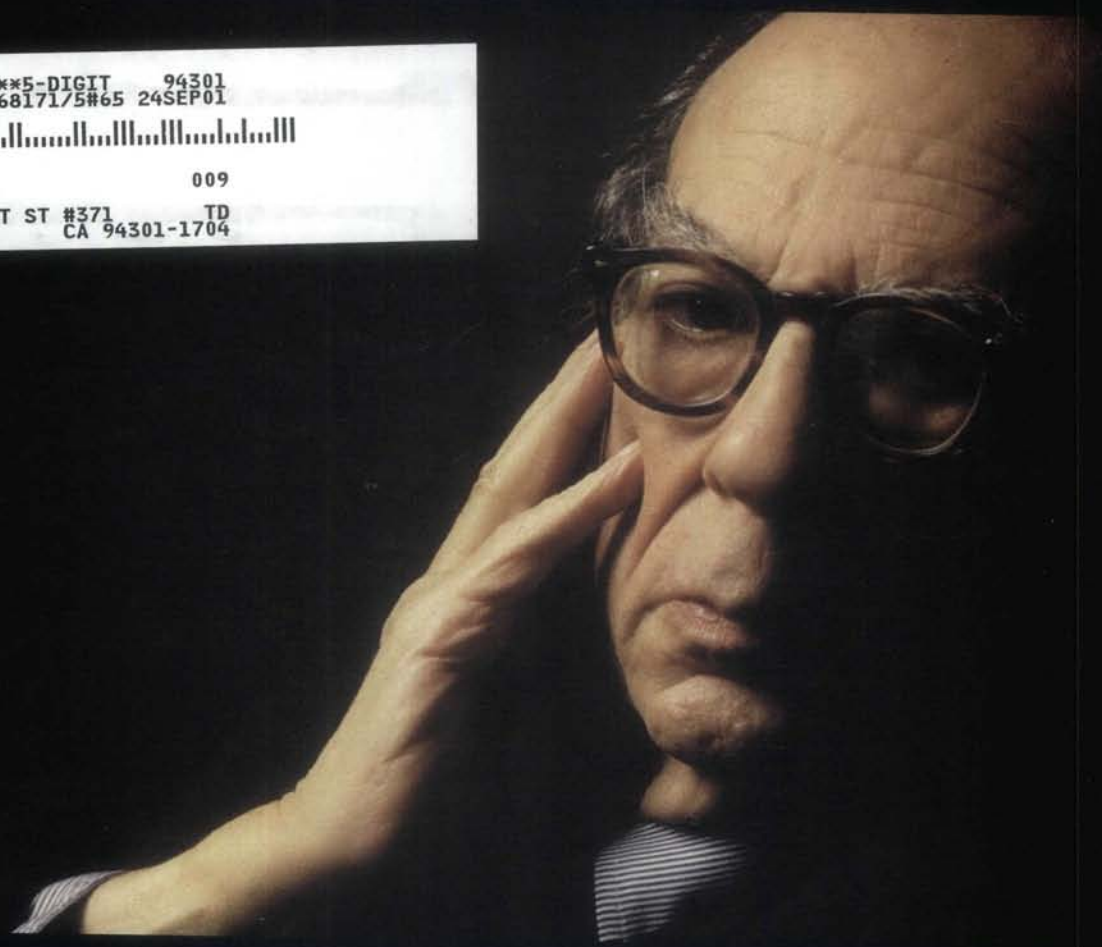

"When a Sage Dies, All Are His Kin."

BY LEON WIESELTIER

The Editors on Iraq and Fast Track

Jeffrey Rosen and Michael Sandel Fix Affirmative Action

Jed Perl Wrecks Robert Rauschenberg

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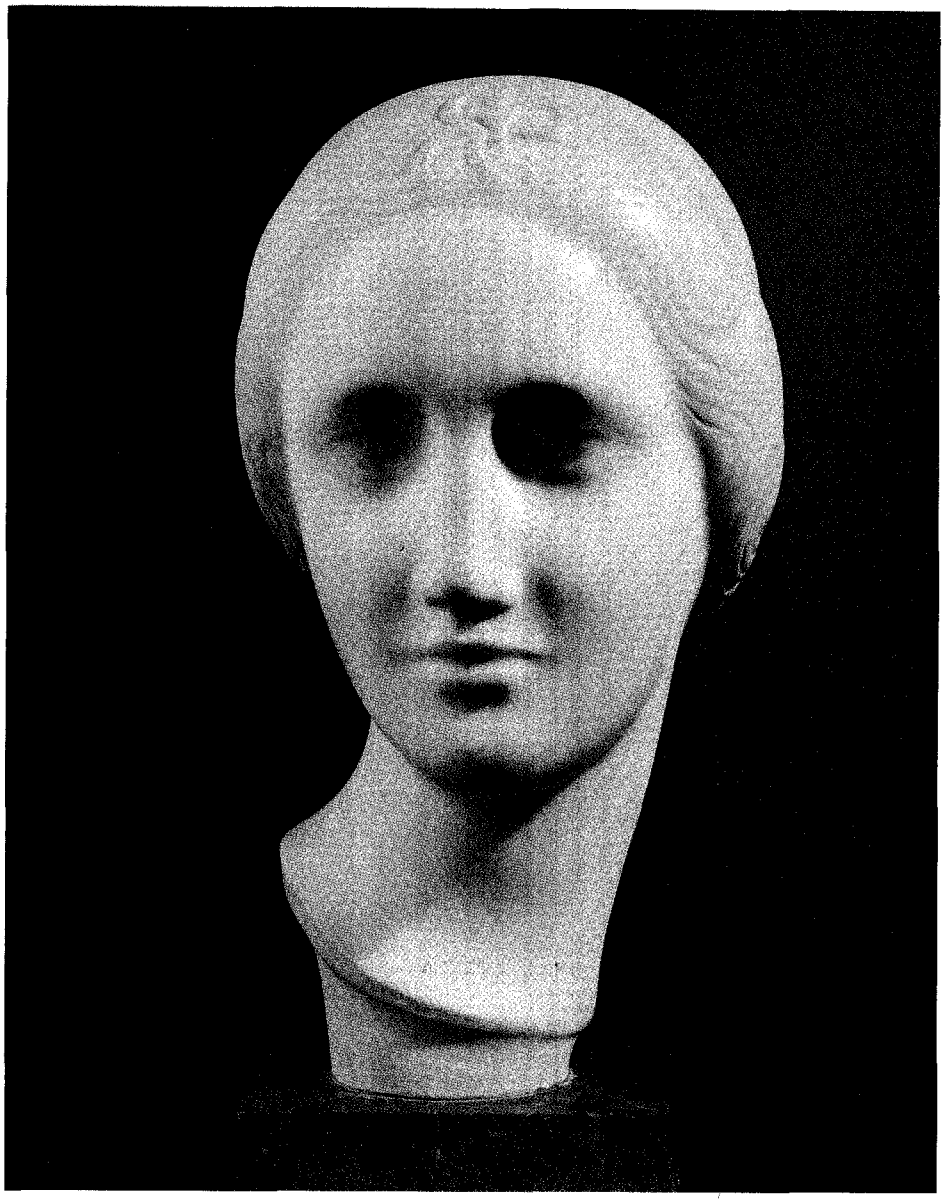
Elie Nadelman

[1882–1946]



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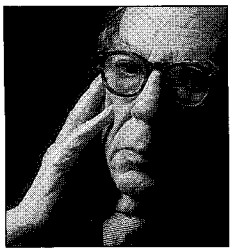

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CORRESPONDENCE

Right on

To the editors:

Your cover story "Robespierre of the Right" (October 27) is filled with many insults. But to compare me with a Frenchman, that is the unkindest cut of all.

PAUL M. WEYRICH
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

David Grann's hit piece on Paul Weyrich helps explain why the value system in Washington is so alien to most Americans. In the article, Grann makes fun of Weyrich for believing in certain principles and mocks him for acting on those principles. Grann even ridicules Weyrich for crossing himself before a meal. Perhaps this adds up to a damning indictment in Washington, but these traits actually are considered admirable outside the Beltway.

Furthermore, as a former host for NET's morning program, I am amazed at the inaccurate depiction of Weyrich's television network. Rather than enforcing ideological conformity, most shows took special pains to book liberal guests.

DANIEL J. MITCHELL
Fairfax, Virginia

To the editors:

In a town full of empty suits with Ph.D.'s whose idea of a hard day is having a three martini lunch at the Capital Grille, Paul Weyrich is a refreshing change of pace. And in a place where an occasional devastating op-ed piece passes for a display of emotion, Weyrich's passion, even in anger, is a breath of fresh air.

Few of the geniuses quoted in your article would be a part of the political elite in Washington today without Weyrich's blood, sweat, and tears.

Weyrich understands better than anyone that nothing happens in this town without making people uncomfortable. While some of his critics are content to rest on their newly acquired laurels, Weyrich speaks for those of us on the outside who expect discipline and performance, not wisecracks and excuses.

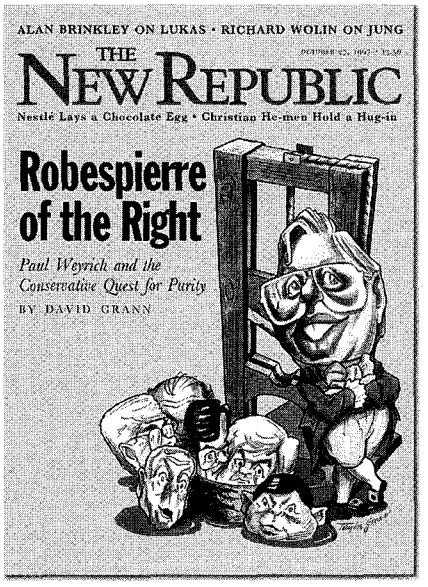
MAUREEN AND NEAL HOGAN
Washington, D.C.

Puget sounds off

To the editors:

Ruth Shalit's account of the Professor Harmon Zeigler sexual harassment case ("Sexual Healing," October 27) was rather more fanciful than factual. This is not surprising since the writer appears to have relied solely on Mr. Zeigler's own statements and certainly never interviewed anyone at the University of Puget Sound.

For the record, the university has never determined whether Mr. Zeigler was innocent or guilty of the sexual harassment charges against him by three female students (including sexual relations with an undergraduate). Why not? Because Mr. Zeigler, in consultation with his lawyer, elected to take advantage of the university's early retirement policy and receive a $164,000 retirement benefit rather than continue the faculty hearing process that would have led to a finding of his guilt or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THE NEW REPUBLIC
Nestlé Lays a Chocolate Egg · Christian He-men Hold a Hug-in
Robespierre of the Right
Paul Weyrich and the Conservative Quest for Purity
BY DAVID GRANN

innocence. At no time did the dean tell Mr. Zeigler that his only choice was to retire or be fired. The dean did tell him, truthfully, that if the charges were proved, there was a good chance the faculty hearing committee would recommend his dismissal. After reviewing his options with his attorney, Mr. Zeigler decided to retire.

He then turned around and sued the university, claiming that he resigned under duress and was also incompetent to sign the resignation agreement because of mental illness. The jury saw it his way and awarded him about $1.5 million. But that was not the end of the story. After the university filed an appeal, an appeal we felt we had a good chance of winning, Mr. Zeigler invited a settlement discussion, and the insurance companies settled the case for a fraction of the jury award. When all was said and done, the university paid Mr. Zeigler not a penny more than the $164,000 he originally accepted as an early retirement benefit. This time around, though, we insisted on having his psychiatrist certify that he was mentally competent to sign the agreement.

ALAN SMITH
University of Puget Sound
Tacoma, Washington

The sky is falling

To the editors:

In "No Free Launch" (November 3), Stephen Glass seriously misrepresents the opposition to the launch to Saturn of the Cassini probe, whose power source contains 72.3 pounds of plutonium. Mr. Glass paints the opposition in Congress as consisting primarily of Republicans wishing to use the controversy for political gain, or as an excuse to slash NASA funding. At the same time, he paints popular opposition to the probe as consisting of radical "Chicken Littles" making unreasonable predictions that the sky is falling.

Both characterizations are wrong. I led a bipartisan group of over a dozen of my colleagues in requesting that President Clinton delay the launch until an independent, unbiased risk assessment could be made. I have always supported NASA and funding for scientific projects, and I did not act here out of a desire to slash NASA's budget. I have been called many things during my years in politics, but "Republican" is a new one.

Like many others who opposed the mission, I do not believe that the sky is falling. We knew all along—and said all along—that Cassini might be launched, successfully fly by Earth in 1999, and reach Saturn without mishap.

Our objection has always been that the risk—not the certainty, but the risk—was too great. We see Cassini as one in a series of missions, each subject to the same dangers, each powered by Plutonium-238, one of the deadliest substances known. Finally, we refused to accept as gospel NASA's risk projections of one-in-100,000, or one-in-a-million. These numbers were pulled out of the air, just as NASA pulled out of the air its pre-1986 space shuttle launch failure estimate of one-in-100,000. After the Challenger disaster, NASA revised that figure to one-in-76.

Mr. Glass mentions only in passing what has been too often ignored in this debate: the rational, scientific voices who urge caution—voices like that of Alan Kohn, who worked for 30 years as a NASA emergency preparedness operations officer, and who is now speaking out against the risks posed by Cassini.

These are the reasons I led my colleagues in opposing the launch of the

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Cassini probe. If we cross our fingers and trivialize the opposition, as Mr. Glass would have us do, eventually we will have an accident. That is a risk that none of us should be willing to take.

JERROLD NADLER
U.S. Representative
Washington, D.C.

The chocolate wars

To the editors:

Your October 27 article "Bittersweet" erroneously suggests that Nestlé Magic—a product containing a small Disney figurine alluringly encased in a chocolate-covered plastic ball—was perfectly safe for children, and that public officials wrongly pressured the company to withdraw it.

The toys were found inside candy, they looked like candy, they smelled like candy, and they inevitably enticed small children to put these toys in their mouths. The product passed Consumer Product Safety Commission safety standards, such as the choke test, by so slim a margin that it was barely visible to the naked eye.

These two companies—Nestlé and Disney—owe most of their success to children. Perhaps they might have been a little bit more solicitous or sensitive to child safety, and not marketed a product that cuts microscopically close to the minimally acceptable.

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
State Attorney General
Hartford, Connecticut

Sincere sissies

To the editors:

I think it is unfair of Hanna Rosin to label men as "sissies" just because they happen to become openly emotional for once in their lives ("Promise Weepers," October 27). And by the way, I'm pretty sure the men she describes are much more sincere than the average member of the Republican leadership and really didn't deserve the comparison.

N. MANZO
Berkeley, California

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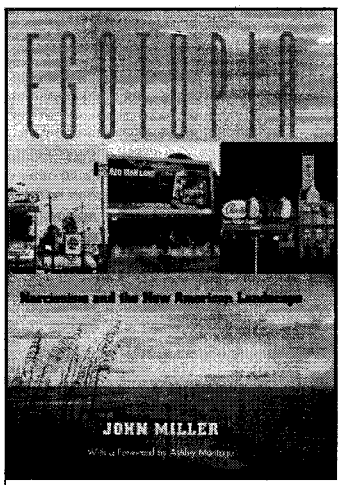

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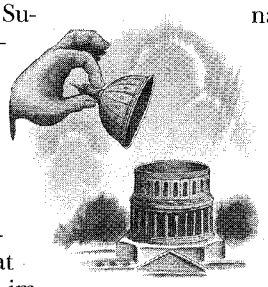
FROM WASHINGTON

Lee's way

Senate Republicans have blocked Bill Lann Lee's nomination to be assistant attorney general for Civil Rights on the grounds that his views are "out of the mainstream." Lee's editorial supporters, including *The New York Times*, denounce this as a "gross misrepresentation," and before examining his writings, I was prepared to believe them. But based on Lee's testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee and on his record as counsel to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, it's hard to avoid the conclusion that Lee represents the least nuanced tendencies of liberal racialism. For those of us who still hope President Clinton can stake out a tough-minded middle ground in the civil-rights debate, Lee's repudiation is a golden opportunity.

In his confirmation hearings, Lee was questioned about a law review article, "A Right to an Integrated Education," that was published in 1982. "The simple response to the 'white flight' objection," Lee wrote, "is that, as required by settled law, popular hostility to desegregation is not a proper objection to the vindication of constitutional rights." Lee's enthusiasm, in the 1980s, for a vision of court-ordered busing that the Supreme Court and the country have come to reject in the 1990s shouldn't, by itself, be disqualifying. In the article, however, Lee reveals his views on the most important civil-rights question of this decade: Are neutral laws and standards that have unintended "disparate impact" on some minority groups a form of impermissible discrimination? And Lee's views on this question are distressing.



In his article, he questions the constitutionality of minimum competency tests, which have been endorsed by the Clinton administration and by many states. "These tests usually have a severe adverse impact on minority groups," Lee argued, noting that "the use of such tests has been enjoined on the grounds that they ... are fundamentally unfair and violate due process." And Lee has put these views into practice. The Los Angeles office of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, which Lee heads, joined other civil-rights groups in filing a complaint with the Department of Education claiming that the decline in minority admissions at the University of California since the Regents' decision to end racial preferences was a form of illegal discrimination—because grades and test scores have a disparate impact on minorities. Taken to its logical extreme, this position would mean that all universities would have to select their students randomly from a list of minimally qualified applicants.

Even more troubling is Lee's view, which he reaffirmed at his hearings, that Proposition 209, the California Civil Rights Initiative, is unconstitutional. In 1982, Lee had signed a Supreme Court brief arguing that a Washington state initiative prohibiting forced busing was unconstitutional, because it changed the political process to make it harder for minorities to achieve their political goals. The Supreme Court narrowly adopted Lee's argument in 1982, and the Legal Defense Fund made a similar argument against the constitutionality of Proposition 209 last summer. As long as the 1982 case remains on the books, this is an unconvincing argument, but not an absurd one. In another brief, the Legal Defense Fund went further, however, arguing that Proposition 209, which forbids racial preferences, is illegal because, in the Legal Defense Fund's view, the Constitution and federal civil-rights laws essentially require racial preferences. This view has no support in current law, and no one who holds it should head the Civil Rights division.

Finally, there is the question of when affirmative action is constitutionally permitted. In response to a question from Senator John Ashcroft, a Missouri Republican, Lee suggested that the Small Business Administration's set-asides for minority contractors "comply with the Supreme Court's holding in *Adarand*," especially because the SBA proposes to "improve the program by expanding the definition of disadvantaged persons." Lee's reading of *Adarand* is tendentious and implausible. There is no evidence of discrimination in federal contracting against many of the minority groups on the SBA's list, which includes Aleuts as well as African Americans. In the 1980s,

continued on page 53

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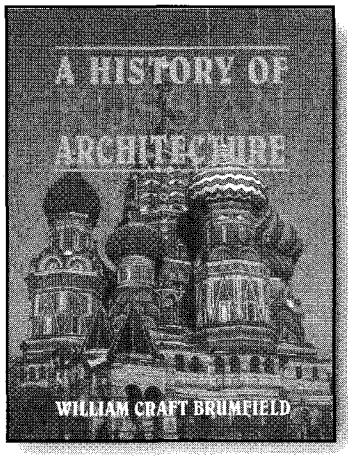

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 1, 1997

GO IT ALONE

The nonsense has gone on long enough. Saddam Hussein isn't prolonging the crisis in the Gulf; the Russians and the French, with the acquiescence of the United States, are. While our so-called allies refuse to authorize tougher economic sanctions against Baghdad, let alone military force, the U.S. has sought to reach a diplomatic solution through the U.N. We can't strike militarily, the thinking goes, unless Saddam fires at our U-2 spy planes. Saddam's refusal to allow in American U.N. inspectors is a U.N. problem, not an American one. And so on.

The time has come to dispense with the charade of the U.N.-led Gulf War coalition. If Saddam will not allow U.N.—and, more to the point, American—inspectors to enforce the U.N.-imposed ban on biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, then the administration must revert to its only viable option: a military strike that targets Iraq's clandestine weapons development program.

The French and the Russians will duly complain that they were never consulted. So what? The French and the Russians will complain about *any* policy the U.S. pursues short of abject appeasement of the Iraqi despot. "The savage nations of the globe," observed Edward Gibbon, "are the common enemies of civilized society." But while the U.S. has been trying to prop up its policy of dual containment—fencing in both Iran and Iraq—the Europeans have been subverting it. The French have been busy cutting oil deals in Iran, while the Russians have just as eagerly been supplying Baghdad with a wide variety of military materials. These are countries that the Clinton administration worries about offending?

The creaky contraption known as the Gulf War coalition could function only as long as Saddam was despoiling Kuwait. The specter of Saddam's troops murdering and looting and raping their small neighbor was too much even for the French and the then-Soviets to overlook, and it sent a shiver down the spines of the next-door Saudis. But now that Saddam is back to brutalizing his own populace, any moral considerations have gone out the window.

The current crisis offers a grim reminder of how much was lost when the Bush administration declined to bring the Gulf War to a complete end. Instead of pursuing Saddam and his Republican Guard all the way to Baghdad, President Bush and General Colin Powell decided it would be more prudent to leave Saddam in power. A united Iraq, they thought, was a precondition for stability in the Gulf. So the Kurds and Shiites were left to Saddam's tender mercies, while the Iraqi military was rebuilt. Or, rather, rebuilt in an even more sinister way. Saddam's innovation, such as it is, has been to rely on germ warfare. In a devastating report in *The Washington Post* on November 9, R. Jeffrey Smith laid out the bare details of Saddam's crash program in germ warfare.

Far from being on the ropes, Saddam is calling the shots. His bellicosity toward U.N. inspectors is, of course, nothing new. On the contrary, Iraqi officials have been impeding them for years. Some of the most flagrant incidents took place toward the end of September, when American microbiologist Diane Seaman, who was leading the U.N. team, bumped into two Iraqis trying to carry briefcases out of a suspected weapons production site. When the men opened the briefcases, Seaman and her fellow inspectors found laboratory kits for testing a variety of biological weapons. Saddam's aide, Abid Hamid Makmoud, is said to be organizing an entire bureaucracy dedicated to covering up any evidence of Iraqi violations. Dozens of standoffs have taken place between U.N. inspectors and Iraqi officials over germ warfare; like the current manufactured impasse, these episodes bought time for Saddam to hide evidence from the U.N.

Iraq, of course, claims that it has halted all poison, germ, and nuclear programs. "We are 100 percent confident that we have done all our commitments," announced Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz a week ago. Aziz has it easy; the French and the Russians are only too eager to credit his denials. So it is up to the U.S. to put a stop to Saddam. So far, the only Clinton administration official who seems to appreciate the depths of Saddam's malevolence is Madeleine Albright. Saddam, the Secretary of State said, is a "congenital liar"; the U.S., she hinted, was ready to act unilaterally. President Clinton, however, said he was "impressed with the unity of the world community" against Iraq. This will not do. The U.S. has 20,000 troops in the Persian Gulf region as well as a dozen warships and 200 warplanes. Not to act would be the worst action of all. •

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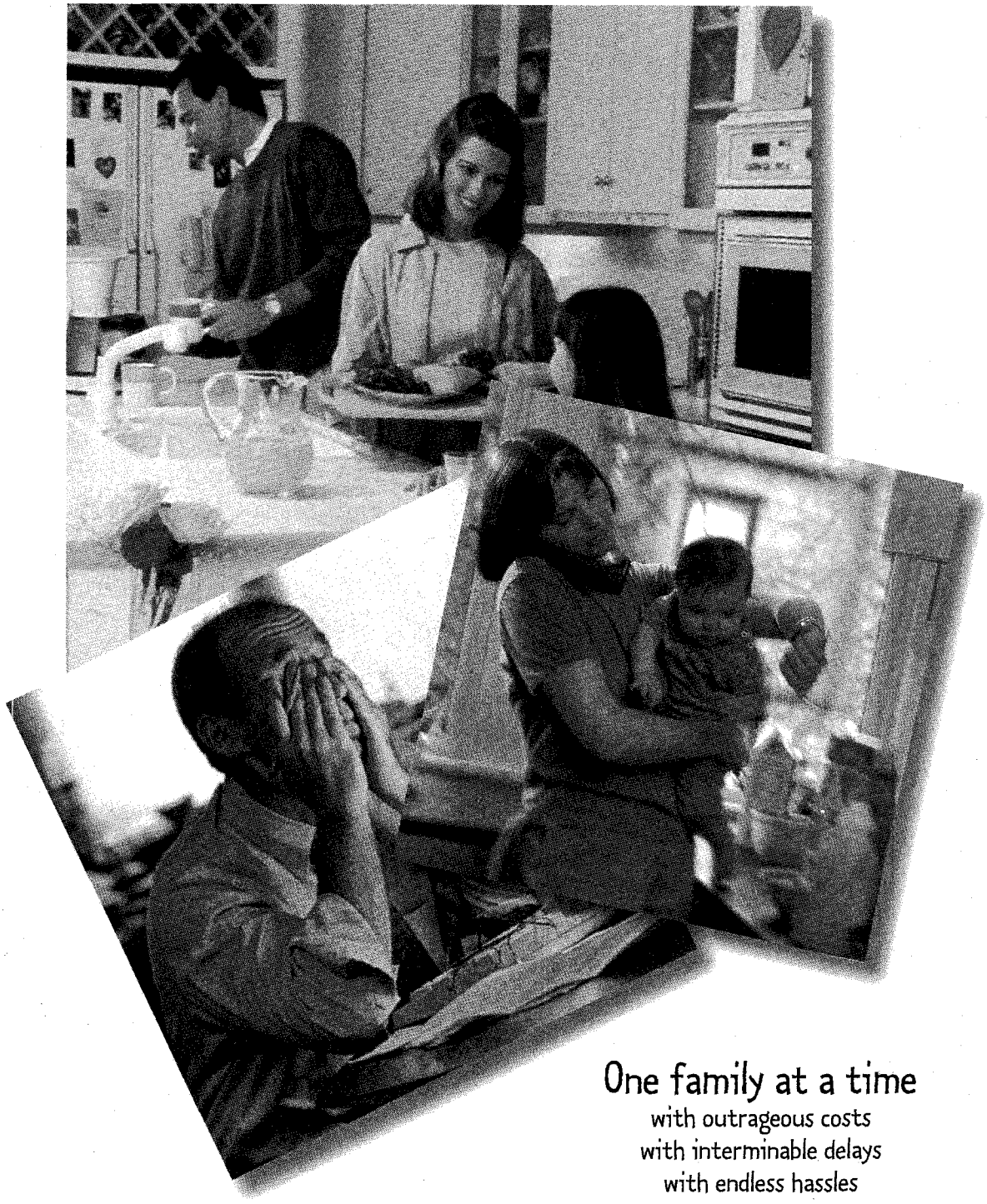
HOW ARE THE BELL MONOPOLIES STOPPING COMPETITION?



One family at a time
with outrageous costs
with interminable delays
with endless hassles

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Rob Cramer would have to work for 2 days to earn the money a local Bell monopoly charges to switch local service. ($261)

The Bell monopolies charge up to $261 to allow you to change local phone companies. To change long distance companies, a process that takes just about as much work, they charge just $5 or less.

This is another ploy clearly meant to discourage people from asking to try another local phone company. And, unfortunately, it works.

The Bell monopolies are creating new barriers to competition every day. But we won't stop until consumers get relief. MCI will work with federal and state regulators, and other new entrants, to open local markets to offer people a real choice. Together, we will make the regional Bells obey the spirit of the law, pass the Telecommunication Act's Fair Play Test, and stop abusing consumers.

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Source: Line installation and order charges effective 11/10/97: California $261, Florida $180, Massachusetts $126, Oregon $117, Wisconsin $92.

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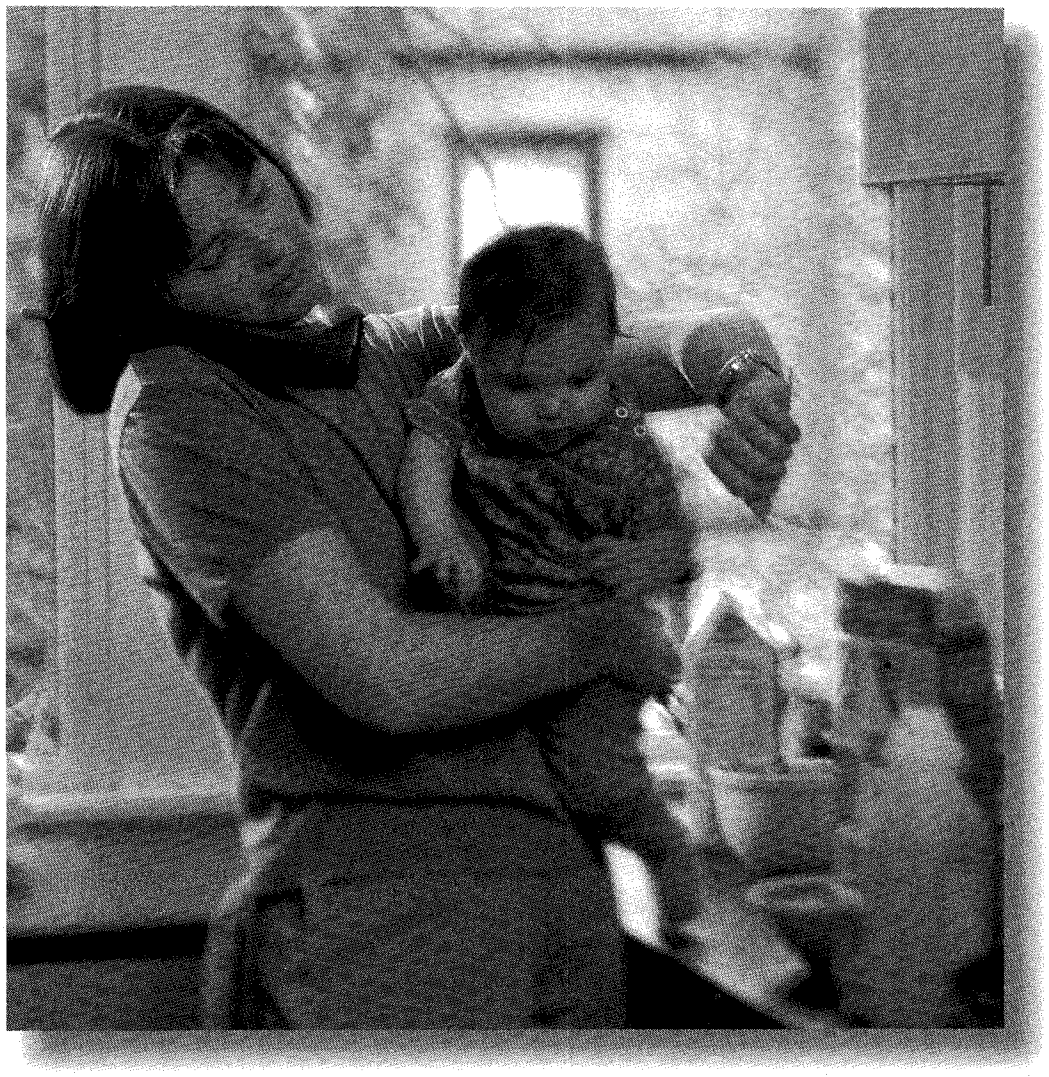
The local Bell monopolies are forcing the Clark family to wait up to 6 weeks just to switch phone companies. 6 long weeks of hassles and higher rates.



People who ask to switch to a local phone company are often left in a state of limbo. Since they don't know when, or if, their request will be honored by the Bell monopoly. In some cases, people have to call their Bell monopoly as many as eight times to get any action at all, while at the same time paying higher rates and not getting the carrier of their choice.

The Bell monopolies are creating new barriers to competition every day. But we won't stop until consumers get relief. MCI will work with federal and state regulators, and other new entrants, to open local markets to offer people a real choice. Together, we will make the regional Bells obey the spirit of the law, pass the Telecommunication Act's Fair Play Test, and stop abusing consumers.

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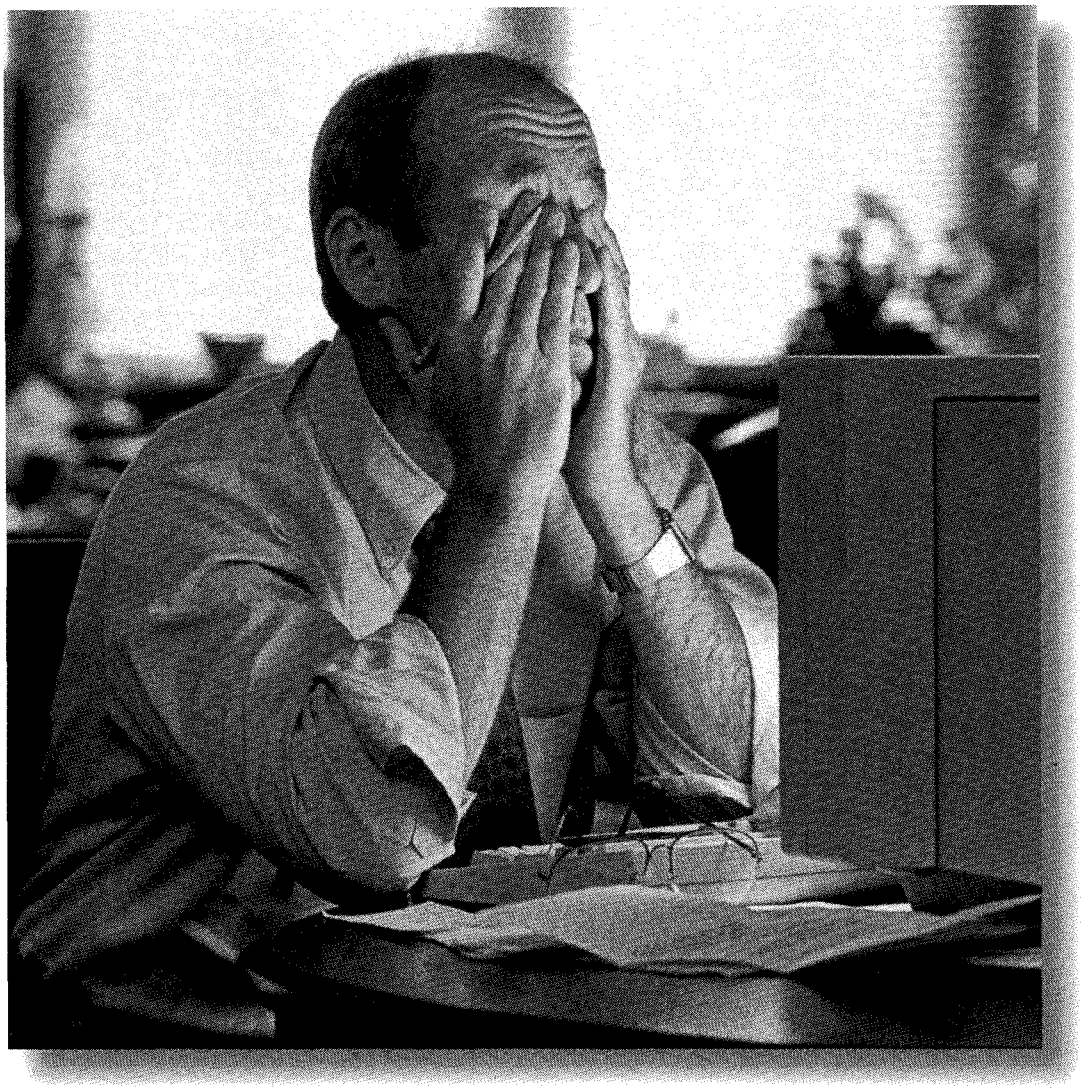
John Stinnett had the right to choose a new local phone company. He just wasn't prepared for the Bell monopoly bickering, arguing and hassles.



The Bell monopolies have their ways of keeping residential and small business customers. Instead of letting you switch local providers quickly and easily, Bell monopolies have argued, misled and delayed. Other times they pressure you to explain why you want to switch. Then there are those intimidating letters from the Bell monopolies that try to persuade you not to exercise your right to choose.

We think switching to a new local phone company should be as easy as choosing a new mechanic, a dry cleaner—or a long distance company.

The Bell monopolies are creating new barriers to competition every day. But we won't stop until consumers get relief. MCI will work with federal and state regulators, and other new entrants, to open local markets to offer people a real choice. Together, we will make the regional Bells obey the spirit of the law, pass the Telecommunication Act's Fair Play Test, and stop abusing consumers.

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WRONG TRACK

Free trade kills, according to House Minority Whip David Bonior. After beating "fast track" trade negotiating authority, Bonior blamed the North American Free Trade Agreement for the fact that "in Michigan a little girl named Lindsey almost died from hepatitis she got from eating contaminated Mexican strawberries." But no one knows if the berries were contaminated in Mexico or in a processing plant in California. And what about the recent recall of Iowa hamburger contaminated with E. coli? Food safety is just one of many phony issues that foes of fast track invoked in their crusade to defeat President Clinton. Even in the context of an issue that American politicians have rarely debated honestly, the campaign by organized labor and its Democratic acolytes on the Hill was a demagogic one.

What were the stakes? Fast track strengthens (or would have strengthened) America's hand in international trade negotiations by permitting the president to negotiate agreements with other countries that could not then be picked apart by congressional amendment. The United States has been doing business this way for decades. For the most part, the purpose of these agreements, like NAFTA, is to make mutual reductions in tariffs. We open our market a little bit to our trading partners' products, and vice versa. The result is that producers of both countries compete in one another's marketplaces on the basis of price and quality. This is a massive boon to consumers, i.e., ordinary people. It also helps keep American industry in peak condition.

There's no use pretending that international competition doesn't also have costs. Some costs are diffuse—a bit of downward pressure on wages, though no one can say exactly how much. Some costs are quite visible—jobs lost at firms that cannot compete with foreign producers. When the jobs are union jobs, as they often are, the AFL-CIO worries, and that opens political opportunities for Dick Gephardt and David Bonior.

But the question is not whether international competition is an unqualified good; the question is whether there is any realistic alternative. There isn't. The administration had little choice, given Republican control of the House, but to pursue a relatively pure version of free trade—i.e., one without the side agreements on "environmental quality, worker and human rights" that Gephardt demanded. But Gephardt's good faith is questionable (and not only because he so clearly saw the fast-track vote as the first primary of campaign 2000). Gephardt has always been vague about what level of environmental protection and worker rights would satisfy him. We suspect that it is a level so high that no plausible prospective candidate for inclusion in NAFTA—democratic Chile, for example—would, or should, be willing to meet it.

Economically, the case for free trade remains as strong as ever. The costs of trying to shield America from international competition—whether through old-fashioned tariffs and import quotas, or through Gephardt's newfangled environmental quality treaties—are generally greater than those of facing up to it. Protection usually saves jobs for American workers at a cost per job far in excess of the wages preserved. What's "fair" about that? The cost to the economy of preserving existing jobs retards the creation of new ones in competitive, export-oriented, high-tech businesses that free trade stimulates. These are new jobs which, contrary to protectionist myth, often pay as much as, or more than, jobs in traditional industries.

It is doubtful that agreements on "workers' rights" would actually end up doing much good for their intended beneficiaries abroad. Bonior likes to tell the story of Rosa Maria Gonzalez, a Mexican woman who "works in a state-of-the-art factory making circuit boards, but lives in a cardboard shack next to a sewage canal. She makes 59 cents an hour. . . ." But how would Gonzalez be better off if the American market for circuit boards were closed in protest of her plight? In that case, she might have to immigrate illegally to the U.S. As for the sewage canal, Mexico has been able to invest heavily in public health and environmental clean-up as its economy has grown, thanks largely to free trade.

How ironic that opponents of free trade sank fast track at a time when America's engagement in international competition is at its highest level in almost a century, and when the fruits of American success—minimal inflation and unemployment, rising hourly wages—are there for all to see. Fast track was not only a fight for the soul of the Democratic Party; it was also a fight for the brain of the Democratic Party. In that sense, it was depressing how quickly the White House let itself get sucked into a game of trading favors for votes. But it was even more depressing to examine the arguments that won. •

NOTEBOOK

PROTECTIONIST RACKET: At Congressman Sherrod Brown's press conference celebrating fast-track's defeat, one prop was a list of groups opposed to the bill. It was an impressive list—broadcast nationwide by CBS and CNN—except for one thing: it's inaccurate. Although some representatives from the groups oppose fast track individually, many of the groups told us they have no official position on the issue. "What's fast track?" asked a spokesperson for the National Women's Law Center. "I don't know if we've been working on it at all," said a representative of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. "You know," said a disbelieving Human Rights Campaign spokesman, "we're a gay rights organization. We wouldn't be involved with that." Two other organizations listed, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, also said they had taken no stance on the bill. Brown's excuse? He got the list from the House Democratic leadership.

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ONWARD AND DOWNWARD WITH THE ARTS: In *The New Yorker* last week, there appeared an essay by Gore Vidal on John Quincy Adams and the *Amistad*. No, not exactly. There appeared an essay by Gore Vidal about John Quincy Adams and the *Amistad* and a movie. "Adams. *Amistad*. Spielberg." Get it? The piece is called "Reel History," which is just about the only kind of history that the crank of Ravello writes. Gore Vidal is the thinking man's Julia Phillips. "As Joe Pesci said when I joined the cast of a picture in which he starred . . . ." Oh, what a lucky life! But the real distinction of Vidal's piece has nothing to do with Hollywood, though it follows on another one of his tedious tales of the hot old days, this one on the subject of Grace Kelly's sexual habits. "Now, in a somewhat similar context," writes Vidal, returning to the high seriousness for which he is universally admired, "when I speak of forgotten Presidents, I refer to just about the whole line. Although the names of the four on Mt. Rushmore are not entirely unknown to Anglophone Americans. . . ." There it is. *Anglophone Americans*. We are not really surprised to find Vidal expectorating this sort of nativist slur. For decades he has been tricking out prejudice as progressivism. But *The New Yorker* published those disgusting words. Did the editors edit them? Did the fact-checkers fact-check them? Or should we just lighten up?

EARTHSLINGING: Last month, activists from Earth First! stormed the Eureka, California, district office of Republican Representative Frank Riggs to protest logging in the Headwaters Forest. The protesters spread sawdust around the office, then rolled in a tree stump—around which four of them chained themselves. After the protesters refused police requests to unchain themselves, police officers put pepper spray in the protesters' eyes—which had the desired effect of changing their minds. That would have been the end of this episode, except that now both sides are spinning so hyperbolically that we think they may deserve each other. Riggs's spokesperson likened the protest to "an Oklahoma City type of incident"; Riggs himself suggests a link between the Earth First! protesters and the Unabomber. The Earth First! supporters, for their part, are touting the four pepper spray victims—one of whom goes by the name "Terri Compost"—as martyrs, comparing their treatment to pre-World War II Germany. In November, a group of "concerned citizens" protested outside of the Eureka office to demand that Riggs either apologize or resign. "We were trying to show that Earth First! isn't a fringe element," says Sig Brit Cox, the protest organizer. "We had pretty impressive individuals [at the protest]. We had people who run companies. We had clergy. We had a Jewish rabbi. Well, he's not a rabbi, but he's a Jewish optometrist." Another protest outside Riggs's office is scheduled, at which some members of Veterans for Peace are going to present their war medals to, as they are now known, "the survivors of the pepper spray event." •

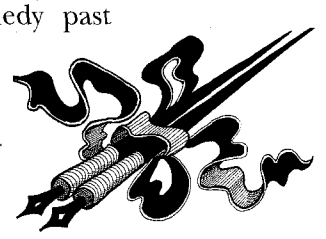
THE HARD QUESTIONS

PICKING WINNERS

By Michael J. Sandel

Some say it is all in the wording. When the recent referendum in Houston asked voters to end affirmative action, they refused to do so. When Proposition 209 asked California voters to end preferential treatment based on race, they obliged.

Controlling the language of a political debate is the first step toward winning it. Yet, in the case of affirmative action, the different answers reflect more than just political manipulation; they reflect a conflicted public mind. Critics of affirmative action say this is because Americans are reluctant to remedy past wrongs with new discrimination, whereas supporters say it is because of the public's lingering racism. Both are mistaken. Affirmative action is difficult to defend for a reason that has nothing to do with race. The real problem is that the best case for affirmative action challenges the sacred American myth that landing a job, or a seat in the freshman class, is a prize one deserves thanks solely to one's own efforts.



Consider the two main arguments for counting race as a factor in university admissions: one argues for compensation, the other for diversity. The compensatory argument views affirmative action as a remedy for past wrongs. Minority students should be given preference now to make up for a history of discrimination that has placed them at an unfair disadvantage. This argument treats admission primarily as a benefit to the recipient, and seeks to distribute the benefit in a way that compensates for past discrimination.

But the compensatory argument is the weaker of the two. As opponents of affirmative action note, those who benefit are not necessarily those who have suffered, and those who pay the compensation are seldom those responsible for the wrongs being rectified. Many beneficiaries of affirmative action are middle-class minority students who did not suffer the hardships that afflict young blacks and Hispanics from the inner city. And those who lose out under affirmative-action programs may have suffered obstacles of their own.

Those who defend affirmative action on compensatory grounds must be able to explain why otherwise qualified applicants should bear the burden of redressing the historic wrongs that minorities have suffered.

continued on page 16

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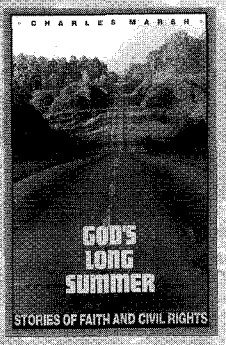

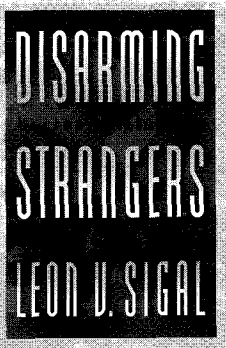

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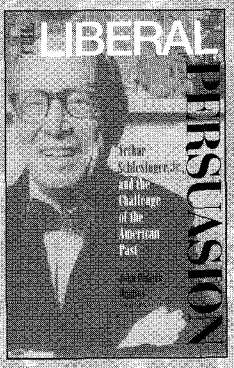

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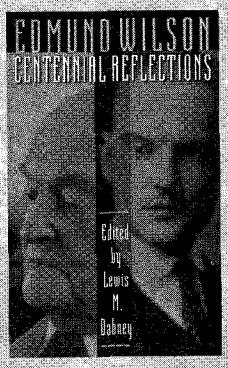

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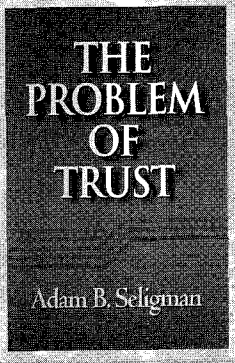

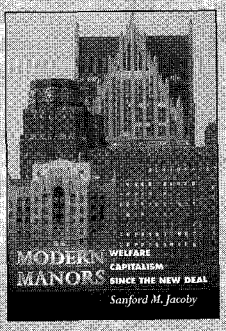

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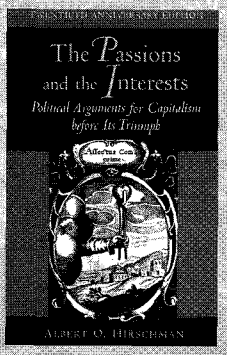

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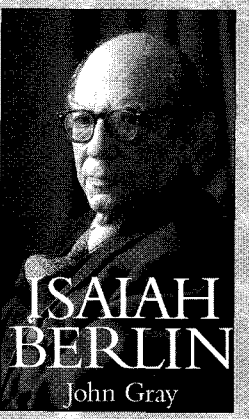

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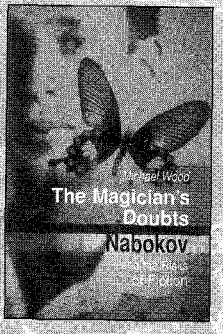

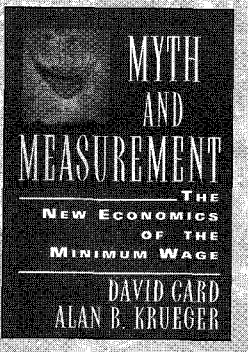

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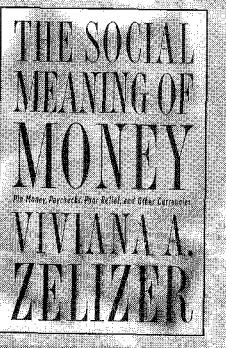

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Even if it can be argued that compensation should not be understood as a specific remedy for particular acts of discrimination, the compensatory rationale is too narrow to justify the range of programs advanced in the name of affirmative action.

The diversity argument is more compelling. It does not depend upon showing that the minority student given preference today actually suffered discrimination in the past. This is because it treats admission less as a reward to the recipient than as a means of advancing a socially worthy aim. The diversity argument holds that a racially mixed student body is desirable because it enables students to learn more from one another than they would if they all came from similar backgrounds. Just as a student body drawn from one part of the country would limit the range of intellectual perspectives, so would one reflecting a homogeneity of race, class, or ethnicity. Moreover, equipping disadvantaged minorities to assume positions of leadership in key public and professional roles advances the university's civic purpose and contributes to the common good.

Critics of affirmative action might concede the goal but question the means. Even if a diverse student body is desirable, isn't it unfair to exclude those who may have high enough test scores but lack, through no fault of their own, the racial or ethnic background that admissions officers need to advance their worthy purposes? Don't the students with the highest academic achievement and promise deserve to be admitted?

The honest answer to this question is: no, they don't. Here lies the far-reaching assumption underlying the diversity argument for affirmative action: admission is not an honor bestowed to reward superior virtue. Neither the student with high test scores nor the student who comes from a disadvantaged minority group morally deserves to be admitted. Provided the criteria of admission are reasonably related to a worthy social purpose, and provided applicants are admitted accordingly, no one has a right to complain.

The moral force of the diversity argument is that it detaches admissions from individual claims and connects them to considerations of the common good. But this is also the source of its political vulnerability. The belief that jobs and opportunities are rewards for those who deserve them runs deep in the American soul. Politicians constantly remind us that those who "work hard and play by the rules" deserve to get ahead, and insist that those who realize the American dream should view their success as the measure of their virtue.

The case for affirmative action and for other acts of social solidarity would be easier if the myth were weaker, if one day Americans grew skeptical of the faith that worldly success reflects moral desert. But what politician is up to the task of explaining that, even at their best, the rules of the game do not reward virtue after all, but simply call forth the qualities required, at any given moment to advance the common good? •

Our empty presidential libraries.

UNDERBOOKED

By Roger Rosenblatt

Great fanfare met last week's opening of the $83 million George Bush Library in College Station, Texas, and it is an impressive monument to behold. The 69,000-square-foot building houses such exhibits as the World War II navy torpedo-bomber in which Bush was shot down over the Pacific, and a 1947 Studebaker similar to the one Bush drove to west Texas when he started out in the oil business. There's also a multimedia presentation on the Gulf War, and, outside, a sculpture depicting the Berlin Wall with a number of horses jumping over it. This is supposed to symbolize Bush's victory over communism, although it's not entirely clear whether the horses represent East Germany or Texas. As for books, there must be a few, somewhere in the building.

Which brings me to my small qualm: Why call the place a library? The Bush family's only connections to books are that they have done admirable work on behalf of adult literacy programs and that their dog, Millie, wrote a best seller. For that matter, why should any presidential library be called a library—especially when the buildings are not primarily collections of written works, but shrines to a particular president's alleged greatness? Very few presidents have been sufficiently distinguished—or, for that matter, literary—to justify the honor of having their names on a library, yet there are eleven presidential libraries currently in existence, with a twelfth on the way. Not to be outdone by the Bush edifice, President Clinton announced over the weekend that his own library will be built on a patch of ground back home in Little Rock.

The Nixon Library draws much attention and attendance. Visitors are shown a film called "Never Give Up," in case they had intended to. Whatever the place may lack in books, it makes up for in artifacts: the wedding gown Tricia Nixon wore when she married Edward Cox, as well as the original gazebo in which the couple exchanged vows in the Rose Garden. On sale in the gift shop are T-shirts emblazoned with a photo of Nixon's 1970 meeting with Elvis Presley, when the president made the King an honorary agent in the war on drugs. The Eisenhower Library has an exhibit on Kay Summersby, often rumored to have been Ike's mistress (though the family denies the affair). If Seymour Hersh's new book is to be believed, space considerations probably obviated similar exhibits in Boston's

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John F. Kennedy Library. Perhaps it's best not to think about the contents of the future Clinton Library.

Of course, the Clintons are famously voracious readers, and a library figures prominently in their romantic past: Hillary Clinton is said to have first met her husband in the Yale law library. One wonders how history might have been different had she spotted Alan Dershowitz instead.

Presidential scholars quoted in *The New York Times* about the significance of presidential libraries insisted that these libraries are not "ego trips" which should obliterate any doubts that, in fact, they are. I'm glad that the libraries have some scholarly value—mainly as repositories of presidential papers—but why not call a shrine a shrine and be done with it? As a kid I used to visit the Theodore Roosevelt museum in my neighborhood in New York, and I would happily gaze at T.R.'s little pocket Bible (the one that once stopped a bullet), a tiger-skin rug with the head intact, and a number of other specimens of big game the old Rough Rider had gunned down. If you want to call a mausoleum a library, do what they did with the Rutherford B. Hayes Library in Fremont, Ohio: fill it with papers and keep it small.

If, instead, you want to build a stone chorus of praise to a president, then come out and say what it is. The George Bush Library could just as easily, and more accurately, be called the George Bush War, Auto, and Horse Museum. If, as claimed, the purpose of these buildings is to provide places where the public may learn about individual presidencies, then they ought to be individually appropriate. Study Warren G. Harding in the Teapot Dome; Hoover in the Herbert Hoover Bank (closed); Nixon in the Richard M. Nixon Recording Studios.

Statues used to be sufficient for satisfying the self-aggrandizing impulses of world leaders. The Roman emperor Nero was more than content with the 120-foot statue of himself he erected in his palace. When it was finished, he said: "Now at last I can begin to live like a human being." It did not cost $83 million. But what a statue used to accomplish now takes an entire library. It must be that a library is commonly recognized as an establishment of dignity, and therefore presidents, who always seem to seek a place in history, find that calling their monuments libraries certifies their historical importance. A presidential library, in other words, *is* a place in history.

I suppose that if it makes the ex-presidents and their followers happy to see these shrines go up—and if the money to build them comes from the private sector—the harm is probably minimal. For my part, though, I would much prefer to see a bronze George Bush mounted on one of those horses leaping over the Berlin Wall outside his library. I would put a bronze Dan Quayle on another horse beside him, and I'd inscribe the statue with the words Quayle uttered on the occasion of the toppling of the Berlin Wall: "I believe we are on an irreversible trend toward more freedom and democracy. But that could change." •

CHICAGO DISPATCH

HOUSE HUNTING

By Jonathan Eig

A rat the size of a full-grown squirrel poked its head from a bag of Doritos and looked straight at Francine Washington, perhaps to see if she intended to interrupt its meal. Washington knew better. She stepped gingerly around the rodent's stinking dumpster, trudged across a muddy patch of balding grass, and moved on toward her car. "I blame the landlord," she muttered for the twelfth time that morning, as she commenced a tour of her crumbling neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago.

The State Street Corridor contains the nation's largest concentration of public housing, including the infamous Robert Taylor Homes, where Washington works, and Stateway Gardens, where she lives. The buildings, most of them 15 or 16 stories high, stretch for about four miles on the east side of the Dan Ryan Expressway. Giant soot stains caused by kitchen fires circle dozens of windows like so many black eyes—evidence, Washington says, of their sturdy construction. "These buildings are just as good as anything you'd find at 5050 N. Lakeshore Drive or on the Magnificent Mile," she says. "The problem here is not the buildings, it's the landlord."

That landlord—the Chicago Housing Authority—has undertaken an ambitious plan to demolish many of the worst high-rises in its decrepit portfolio. The effort is one of the most visible indications of the recent historic shift in federal housing policy: government-owned buildings are being deliberately destroyed, and tenants are being handed rent certificates they can use to find apartments elsewhere. But it remains to be seen whether the certificates will lead residents to new lives or to new slums, and they are highly skeptical.

At 42, Washington is a petite woman with bronze-colored ponytails and enormous, intensely brown eyes. As she navigates the pothole-pocked streets of the Corridor, smoking Kools and sucking ice cubes from a Styrofoam cup, she talks about the housing projects the way an adult child of an alcoholic might talk about her parent: with a toxic blend of anger and love. "I realize some of these buildings must come down," she says. "But there's nowhere for people to go. A lot of people were born and raised here and they still consider it home."

Or at least they used to. At 39th Street and Federal Avenue, workers have just finished hauling away bits of brick and metal from what was an apartment building; now, as Washington cruises by, birds peck at the freshly overturned dirt. At 53rd and Federal, in an area known

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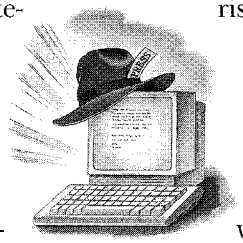
as The Hole, gang members who sell drugs from the breezeways in buildings slated for demolition are already searching for new headquarters. At the nearby Ida B. Wells complex, construction teams are still busy removing the last pieces of the tower that stood at 3833 S. Langley; it became famous three years ago when five-year-old Eric Morse was dangled and then dropped from an abandoned 14th-floor apartment by two boys who were ten and eleven years old.

Then it's on to Stateway Gardens—Washington's home—which may be next on the demolition list. Washington's 13-year-old nephew, Clevan, who also lives in Stateway, made national news last spring when he and a friend were attacked by a gang of white teenagers in the nearby Bridgeport neighborhood. Nevertheless, she says, "I feel safer here at night than I do anywhere in the city. You keep your porch clean, keep your apartment clean, mind your own business ... help those you can, and steer around those you can't."

Not that these are model communities. The average income at the Robert Taylor Homes is $5,907; it has one of the highest violent crime rates in the city; and only about four percent of all residents are employed. The elevators break down routinely, the plumbing leaks, stairwells are dark and dank even by day, maintenance is slow if it comes at all, and the sewer system raises an unholy stink every time it rains. For at least two decades, sociologists and advocates for the poor have documented the failures of high-rise projects populated almost exclusively by extremely poor single-parent families—which is why the government is finally scrapping the big gray monsters.



Congress and the administration have yet to work out the details, but both parties seem intent upon approving legislation that would raze more than 100,000 units of high-rise public housing. In theory, drug-addled high-rise hells would be transformed into mixed-income communities with supermarkets, libraries, churches, and good-paying jobs. Actually, Washington and her neighbors believe all that. They just don't believe they'll be around to enjoy it, and they may be right. Over time, according to some estimates, the number of subsidized housing units available to poor families could fall by 1.5 million. In the State Street Corridor, where 800 units are in the process of being demolished, only about 250 replacements are planned. Even if they do get built, half of the new units will likely be reserved for working-poor families earning up to $40,000 a year.

Those facing displacement will get Section 8 certificates, relocation to other high-rises, and rent vouchers for use in private apartments. But the vouchers and certificates won't help unless they are offered in abundant supply and landlords don't discriminate against families, particularly large families or families headed by teen mothers from the infamous Robert Taylor Homes. So far, that hasn't happened, and the Coalition to Protect Public Housing estimates that about 30 percent of the families issued vouchers cannot find housing. (Public officials have not disputed these figures, and many experts think they are a conservative estimate.)

One proposal currently before Congress might accelerate demolitions by requiring any development with more than 300 units and at least a ten percent vacancy rate to undergo a "viability" test. CHA estimates that would mean the demolition of another 18,000 units—out of a total stock of 40,700. When the Department of Housing and Urban Development took over the CHA in 1995—and put Joseph Shuldiner in charge—it said Chicago would be the incubator for the nation's public-housing reform. But HUD would rather have CHA be an apartment broker than a landlord, and the quickest way to get out of the landlord business is to liquidate as many buildings as possible.

Shuldiner's tour of the city's public-housing stock is actually a lot like Francine Washington's, only he directs his expedition from the back seat of a luxury sedan, pointing at his nightmares through tinted windows. He sees the same grim scenes as Washington ("Seller ... seller ... customer," he says, counting the drug deals outside one building), but while she clings to the shambles, he wants it gone. He'd like to do away with about a third of all the city's high-rises, and a few low-rises, too. Construction of new units will move forward as fast as funding allows, but, he admits, they will never keep pace with demolitions.

Until recently, the federal courts monitored CHA to make sure public-housing residents were moved to integrated and suburban neighborhoods. Now Shuldiner is free to act without such constraints. He hopes—hopes—that private developers will reserve enough units for low-income tenants to make a dent in their housing needs. But in some areas, like the Robert Taylor Homes, he knows that no one will rush to build new developments, and that many people will have to move from the immediate area. Shuldiner seems willing to live with that, in large part because the Robert Taylor Homes hardly seem worth saving, and also because there's only so much he can accomplish with current levels of funding. "There's an open window and we want to take advantage of it," he says. "Of course, in many respects we're biting off more than we can chew, but the alternative is to let people go on living in the current conditions."

Apparently, that's what many residents are prepared to do. Francine Washington wants to keep her home. Strange as it sounds, she's built her identity around these big, ugly buildings. Here, she and her neighbors feel the pride of survivorship; they have a hard time imagining living elsewhere. Therefore, it's up to CHA—"the landlord"—to fill in the blanks in their imagination; to show them it really can offer a credible alternative to the Robert Taylor Homes, awful as that project is. "It's just like a mother who drinks and does drugs," Washington says. "That baby's still gonna cry when you take it away from its mother. It's the same with these buildings. I love these buildings."

JONATHAN EIG is a senior editor at *Chicago* magazine.

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Fast track is only the beginning.

THE NATIONALIST REVOLT

By Peter Beinart

At 1:45 in the morning of Monday, November 10, a visibly drained Majority Leader Dick Armey took the floor of the House to announce that the president still didn't have the votes to renew fast track. Seeking a trade negotiating authority enjoyed by every president since Gerald Ford, Bill Clinton had worked the phones frantically. He had sent virtually his entire cabinet to roam the halls of Congress. Al Gore had called fast track's defeat "unthinkable." Yet the bill—supported by three former presidents, the congressional Republican leadership, big business, every prestige newspaper, and practically every mainstream economist—lost. Its failure represents the strongest confirmation yet that American politics is in the throes of transformation.

In 1992, and again in 1996, pundits agonized about the anti-Washington, anti-Wall Street fury unleashed by the candidacies of Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan. In both cases, however, the political establishment regained its footing, put the insurgencies down, and assumed that everything was back to normal. But everything is not back to normal. The nationalist passions unleashed by those rebel candidacies have seeped into the marrow of American politics, and they have lodged themselves in Congress. The fast-track struggle was about wages, and labor standards, and the executive-legislative balance of power. But, more broadly, it was about the changes taking place in American politics—changes driven by the growing power of nationalism.

To understand the magnitude of those changes, consider the history of fast track, which obligates Congress to vote on trade deals without amendment and within 60 days of their submission by the president. First passed in 1974, it was utterly uncontroversial until the end of the cold war. The original vote to grant it was 323 to 36. When the authority expired in 1979, Congress renewed it by a vote of 395 to 7 and, in 1988, the margin was 376 to 45. By 1991, with the Soviet threat gone and hostility shifting to America's protectionist trading partners, fast track faced its first serious opposition, passing by only 40 votes. In 1993, it was renewed again, 295 to 126. The authority expired in 1994, and is now probably dead for the rest of the century.

Hostility to free trade, of course, has deep roots in American politics, and, as the 1991 vote suggests, that hostility has surfaced in recent decades as well. In 1982, with Japanese imports capturing a growing U.S. market share, some Democrats in Congress proposed "domestic content" legislation to require that any car imported to the U.S. be composed of 40 percent American components. The bill failed, but Walter Mondale supported "domestic content" during his 1984 presidential campaign. In 1988, Richard Gephardt made trade retaliation a centerpiece of his White House run, and in 1992, Tom Harkin happily called himself a protectionist.

But a look at the 1991 vote, which until last weekend was the closest fast track had come to defeat, also shows how much broader the hostility to free trade has grown in the past several years. In 1991, the country was in recession and the party more skeptical of free trade, the Democrats, controlled Congress. Yet fast track passed because the Democrats had a robust, largely Southern, pro-free trade wing that constituted more than one-third of the party's membership in the House. And it passed because protectionism was almost nonexistent within the Republican Party: seven-eighths of the House GOP voted for fast track.

Today, renewing fast track should have been easier. The House has 50 more Republicans, and 50 fewer Democrats. Unemployment is below five percent. The president is at the height of his popularity. It's not an election year. But fast track failed, because in the past six years a wave of nationalism has hit both parties, substantially altering their character on issues like trade. At the grassroots, Democratic support for free trade practically no longer exists. Among Republicans, it is quickly diminishing, as protectionism increasingly becomes part of the bundle of principles that constitutes the ideology of the American conservative movement.

The story of the nationalist transformation of American politics starts with the first presidential campaign of the post-cold war era, the campaign of 1992. That election saw a splintering of the Reagan coalition that George Bush had held together in 1988. During the depths of recession, Bush's 1992 vote dropped 16 points from its 1988 level. But the defectors did not go to Bill Clinton who actually won a smaller percentage than Michael Dukakis. They went to Ross Perot.

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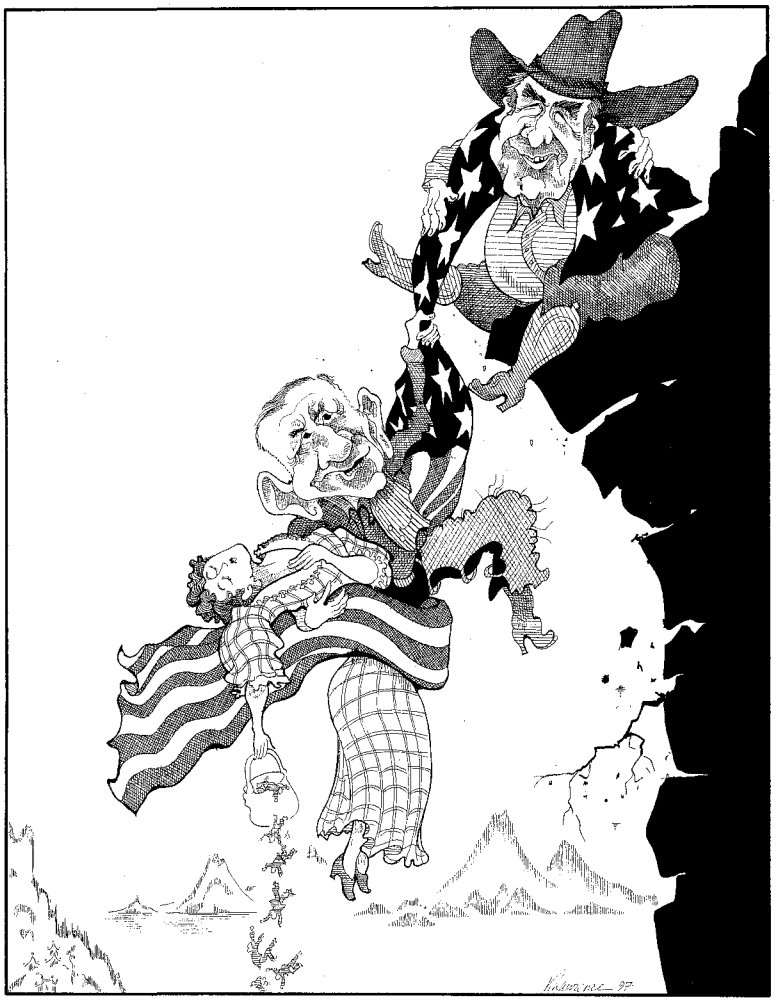
As Ruy Teixeira and Joel Rogers show in their 1996 Economic Policy Institute working paper, *Volatile Voters*, the chunk of the Reagan coalition that came loose in 1992 was noticeably down scale. The 1992 Bush voters were country-club Republicans: economically they had prospered in the '80s, they were most optimistic about the future, they liked free trade. The Perotistas, however, had done the worst economically, were the most pessimistic, and strongly opposed free trade. They were, in other words, the working-class Reagan Democrats and Reagan Independents who had been drawn to the GOP by its "stand up for America" anti-communism and its moral traditionalism. The problem for Bush in 1992 was that Clinton's moderation blunted the social issues, and the cold war was over. The Perotistas were still nationalists, however. They had simply transferred their nationalism from foreign and defense policy to economic policy.

In 1994, the Republicans vowed to get the Perotistas back. They hired Perot's former pollster, Frank Luntz, and aimed the Contract with America at the Perot voters. For their economic anxiety, the contract promised tax relief; for their nationalism, it offered provisions hindering U.S. participation in international peacekeeping, restricting U.N. command of American troops, and mandating the deportation of illegal immigrants convicted of crimes. Coming only three years after George Bush assembled the Gulf War coalition under U.N. auspices, the first two provisions offered an early sign that the GOP was shifting from internationalism to nationalism to recreate its governing coalition.

The 1994 effort, of course, succeeded. Appearing on *Larry King* in October, Perot declared that it was time to give the Republicans "a turn at bat." According to data from the National Election Studies, the percentage of Perot voters supporting Republican House candidates jumped from 45 percent in 1992 to 67 percent in 1994. A remarkable 54 percent of House Republican freshmen reported that they had received campaign assistance from Perot's United We Stand America. But the triumphant Republican leadership hadn't considered how the working-class, nationalistic Perotistas would change the party itself. The shift toward congressional Republicans between 1992 and 1994 was exclusively among the noncollege educated, and the districts that elected GOP freshmen in 1994 were markedly more blue-collar than the ones that Republicans already represented. The GOP hadn't put opposition to NAFTA in the Contract with America, because the party's leadership believed in free trade. But polls showed the Perotistas preoccupied with trade, and overwhelmingly opposed to a free trade agreement that the Republican Party's leaders had supported even more strongly than the Democrats.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Republicans had reassembled the Reagan coalition, but they had done so by importing economic nationalism to replace cold-war nationalism. Overnight, anti-free traders went from being totally marginal within the congressional GOP to being a substantial, noisy minority. Last weekend, three-quarters of the House Republicans supported fast track. According to *Congress Daily*, however, a clear majority of the publicly announced 1994 Republicans opposed it. An aide to one House Democrat puts it this way: "There's been a real shift in the politics of the Republican Party, a whole cultural change. They went after a different segment of society, they changed their whole approach—to try to talk to a whole other cohort of Americans and they got a lot of them into their party and got what they didn't expect on the trade issue."

The radicalism of the newly elected Republicans was widely reported in the wake of the 1994 election. But their economic nationalism remained largely unnoticed because the Clinton administration strategically kept trade votes off the congressional schedule during the 104th Congress. Clinton rushed through GATT during the final days of 1994, before the new Republicans could take their seats. He let fast track expire rather than bring it up before the 1996 election, and, watching the young Republicans froth at the mouth over the 1995 peso

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bailout, the administration provided loan guarantees to Mexico without congressional approval.

Still, it was only a matter of time before the nationalist Republicans started asserting themselves, both in Congress and on the national stage. Pat Buchanan's 1996 campaign provided the vehicle. Although Buchanan's early primary success took the Republican establishment by surprise, he was responding to a larger movement already present within the party—a movement suspicious that U.S. corporations had abandoned their national loyalties. In February, eleven GOP freshmen held a news conference with Buchanan to denounce the peso bailout. And when Republican leaders said Buchanan was bad for the party, several freshmen leapt to his defense. Matt Schlapp, an aide to Kansas freshmen Todd Tiahrt, told *The Hill* that, "Buchanan speaks for a group of the electorate that was important in getting Todd Tiahrt elected." Freshmen Joe Scarborough from Florida enthused to *Time*, "We finally have a group of Republicans who know how to appeal to people who are earning $30,000 or less."

Buchanan specifically targeted the Perot constituency. Many GOP primaries allowed crossover voting by Democrats and Independents, and this allowed Buchanan to focus on the same politically fluid blue-collar voters who had powered the Perot campaign in 1992. In Ohio, for instance, Buchanan campaigned not in the traditionally Republican southwestern part of the state, but in the industrial, northeastern pocket around Akron, Cleveland, and Youngstown, where Perot did well. At the 1995 United We Stand Convention in Dallas, Buchanan received the warmest reception of any Republican presidential contender, and Reform Party vice presidential candidate Pat Choate even gave money to his campaign.

Buchanan's other constituency came from grassroots movement conservatives, many of whom shared the Perotistas' class resentment of the party regulars. Like the Perot voters, they found little appealing in the corporate internationalism left behind when cold-war moralism disappeared. By 1994, the California Republican Assembly, a powerful internal GOP pressure group dedicated to a hard line on conservative social issues, had added protectionism to its basket of positions. Seeking to expand its influence beyond the Golden State, the group began chartering sister chapters across the country—the first in Arizona. And in 1996 the Arizona Republican Assembly endorsed Buchanan. The endorsement hurt Phil Gramm, who was competing for the same conservative slice of the primary electorate. The media generally attributed Buchanan's upset victories over Gramm in the early Arizona primary and Louisiana caucus to superior organization, but former Buchanan staffers believe a key reason was that the movement conservatives were strongly nationalistic on economics.

The turn toward protectionism upon which Buchanan capitalized is part of a broader shift within the American right. In recent years, conservatives have grown increasingly concerned about "sovereignty," a buzzword that encompasses both the right of communities to be free from federal regulation, and America's right to be independent of the U.N. and the World Trade Organization. In California, hostility toward immigration has spawned hostility toward free trade, both under the rubric of sovereignty. Last year, several California activists formed a group called Republicans for the National Interest, headed by Ron Prince, former chairman of the campaign committee for Proposition 187. And this September, they allied with the California Republican Assembly to pull off a stunning achievement: they amended the state GOP's platform to oppose fast track and the extension of NAFTA. Both the CRA, which caters to nationalist conservatives, and Republicans for the National Interest, which includes nationalist Republicans regardless of their views on social issues, are now seeking to duplicate the feat across the country. In December, the CRA will charter its 15th state chapter.

Groups like the CRA win right-wing converts by claiming that unfettered international trade, like unfettered immigration and government bureaucracy, threatens the integrity of local communities. The Virginia Republican Assembly is headed by Michael Farris, president of the Home School Legal Defense Association. The National Rifle Association, silent on NAFTA, this year came out against fast track, as has Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum. Two years ago, two former staffers to North Carolina Republican Senator John East founded *Middle America News*, a clearinghouse for nationalist sentiment on the right. *Human Events*, which hedged on NAFTA, this fall published a cover editorial opposing fast track.

Even the GOP's national party platform reflects the trend. The 1992 platform does not mention the word "sovereignty" once, and it vows that the party will "not tolerate [Democrats'] obstructing the greatest expansion of international trade in history." By 1996, the free-trade rhetoric was comparatively tepid, and hedged by statements like, "Republicans will not allow the World Trade Organization to undermine United States sovereignty." As Alan Tonelson of the United States Business and Industrial Council Educational Foundation noted in a recent *Washington Times* op-ed, polls show Republicans more hostile to free trade than Democrats. The institutions of elite conservatism—the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, the Cato Institute, *The Weekly Standard*, *National Review*, *The Wall Street Journal*—have held the line on free trade. But, at the grassroots, free trade is losing ground to a broadly popular—if embryonic and disorganized—effort to bring the GOP back to its pre-World War II protectionist heritage. Pat Choate predicts that in ten years the GOP will no longer be a free-trade party. Peter Brimelow of *Forbes*, an immigration restrictionist but a free trader, frets that "the free-trade consensus is progressively disintegrating on the right . . . many of the conservative institutions are simply out of touch."

President Clinton's high-profile campaign to boost American exports has obscured the collapse of Democratic support for free trade, but it is just as real as the meltdown on the Republican side. In May 1991,

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91 House Democrats voted to extend fast track (35 percent). By November 1993, 102 House Democrats voted for NAFTA (40 percent). But only about 42 Democrats in the House supported fast track last weekend (20 percent).

The explanation starts with the election of 1994. The avalanche of Democratic retirements and defeats that year disproportionately hit free traders, both because they occupied more marginal (often Southern) seats and because their support for free trade alienated blue-collar voters. Today, fewer than half of the 102 House Democrats who supported NAFTA remain in Congress.

But the 1994 elections had another, more indirect, effect on the party's position on trade. Since the early 1980s, Democrats had aggressively used their control of the House to solicit money from ideologically conservative corporate political action committees; in so doing, the party diversified its funding base away from labor. But when the Republicans took Congress in 1994, they pressured corporations to stop giving to Democrats. And they largely succeeded, because, for the first time in decades, the party more ideologically sympathetic to business also controlled the congressional committees that business lobbied. Meanwhile, in 1995 and 1996, unions stepped up their donations in an effort to regain political influence. The cumulative impact has been dramatic. In 1992, according to Common Cause, Democrats got 86 percent as much from corporate PACs as from labor PACs. By 1996, the ratio was 44 percent.

This would matter less if the party itself, through soft money controlled by the Democratic National Committee, could come to the aide of Democrats abandoned by labor. But the party, reeling from its fund-raising scandals and from the millions that it has returned as a result of them, is $15 million in debt. Any Democratic congressman weighing his vote on fast track had to be concerned by the special election last month in Staten Island. There, a strong Democratic candidate lost because the Republicans blanketed the airwaves with $800,000 of soft-money-funded ads, and the Democratic Party could not respond.

But it would be a mistake to attribute the collapse of Democratic support for free trade in Congress simply to changes in funding. Hostility to free trade is growing on the grassroots left, too. During 1993, six of America's biggest environmental groups—the Environmental Defense Fund, the National Wildlife Federation, Conservation International, the National Resources Defense Council, the National Audubon Society, and the World Wildlife Fund—formed the Environmental Coalition for NAFTA. Today, three of those six groups opposed fast track and the other three did not take a position.

Left-wing environmental groups like Greenpeace and the Sierra Club, increasingly concerned that international trade agreements could deny America the right to prohibit imports produced under environmentally unsafe conditions, have in recent years devoted growing energy to opposing free trade. Powerful consumer groups have come out against fast track, not to mention the entire labor movement including the public employee unions, whose jobs are not affected by trade. The anti-fast track Citizens Trade Campaign—founded in 1992 by Ralph Nader's Public Citizen, Friends of the Earth, the United Auto Workers, the National Farmers Union, the Teamsters, the political arm of the Methodist Church, and others—now has branches in 39 states. Its formation reflects a new focus on trade amongst activist lefties who in the 1980s concentrated on issues like nuclear disarmament and Contra aid. Last month, the Citizens Trade Campaign ran anti-fast track radio ads in 15 congressional districts.

The anti-free trade left is more wary of the label "nationalist" than is the anti-free trade right; environmental groups, for instance, champion international emissions standards that also would bind the U.S. But the leadership of the anti-free trade left is increasingly being forced to come to terms with rising nationalism within its own ranks. Unions, of course, have long opposed immigration. But now, to the horror of much of its leadership, anti-immigration sentiment is sprouting within the environmental movement as well. During February 1996, the Wilderness Society, concerned about the environmental effect of population growth, became the first major environmental organization to call for reduced immigration. And today the Sierra Club is facing a grassroots insurgency over its board's unwillingness to advocate immigration reductions. One former Sierra Club executive director, John Tanton, has even become head of the anti-immigration group FAIR. Leon Kolankiewicz, network coordinator of a small, anti-immigration environmental group called the Carrying Capacity Network, attributes the fight within the Sierra Club to a growing "schism between globalists and those who want to focus on the U.S. environment."

Several weeks ago, I interviewed Congressman Cliff Stearns, a hard right, anti-fast track Florida Republican who last year held a press conference with Pat Buchanan to oppose the Mexican bailout. "The administration cannot make the argument that [NAFTA] has been a winner," he said. "Public Citizen says 500,000 jobs have been lost." I wasn't sure that I had heard him correctly. "You're quoting Public Citizen, Ralph Nader's group?" I asked. "Oh," he replied, "let's not use that." Then, 30 seconds later, he noted that "the Economic Policy Institute says 11,300 jobs have been lost in Florida [as a result of NAFTA]." The Economic Policy Institute is a liberal think tank heavily funded by unions.

The exchange points to the most peculiar aspect of the nationalist transformation. In myriad small ways, the boundaries between right-wing anti-free traders and left-wing anti-free traders are blurring, leaving at least the beginnings of a political coalition that would go simply by the heading "nationalist." Last year, Pat Choate convinced the United Auto Workers to put up money for the United Broadcasting Network (UBN). The network, which now reaches 200 markets, boasts shows hosted by Bay Buchanan; nationalist San Diego Republican Duncan Hunter; Representative Marcy Kaptur, a passionate

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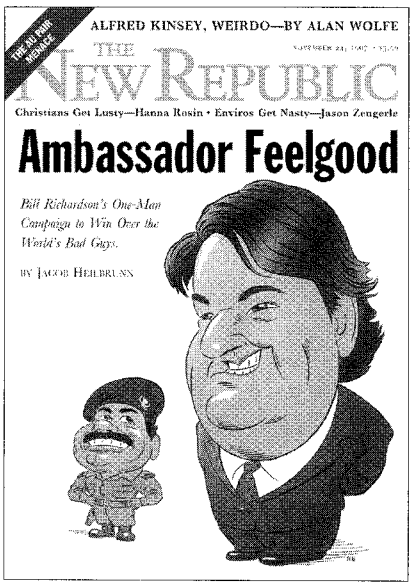
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anti-fast track Democrat from Toledo; and populist Jim Hightower, the former Democratic Agriculture Commissioner of Texas.

And the connections among these seemingly disparate figures extend further. Kaptur and Hunter chair the anti-fast track Congressional Jobs and Fair Trade Caucus, which has hosted speeches by Bay Buchanan, Pat Choate, Mike McClosky of the Sierra Club, and Lori Wallach of Public Citizen. Kaptur brought the house down at Perot's 1995 United We Stand Convention in Dallas and Perot subsequently asked her to be his running mate. Unions have donated money to Duncan Hunter, and several anti-fast track House Republicans have discussed forming a GOP labor caucus.

During the fast-track fight, convergences that mock conventional ideological assumptions sprang up almost daily. Last month, seven first- and second-term Democrats and Republicans held a joint news conference to announce their opposition to fast track, and they have talked of forming a caucus of their own. One of the seven, first-term Democrat Dennis Kucinich from Cleveland, has shown a particular interest in nationalist coalition building. Accused in his 1996 campaign of being beholden to unions, he replied, "Are they my special interest? Yes ... I am not a missionary for labor; I am from the house of labor, the family of labor." But during the fast-track debate he met with Pat Buchanan and he says that "the fast-track vote is a vote on the preservation of our national sovereignty."

DRAWING BY ANTHONY RUSSO FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Zach Wamp, an anti-fast track Republican elected in 1994 from Tennessee, says he hopes the opposition to trade deals "is not just a Republican movement." Republicans for the National Interest is considering opening its doors to nationalist Democrats and Independents, and is meeting with Southern California unions. Choate says the Reform Party's strategy in 1998 will be to challenge vulnerable congressional Republicans, especially on the trade issue, in the hopes of electing Democrats beholden to a nationalist constituency. Jerry Woodruffe, editor of *Middle America News*, says he can imagine some anti-free trade Republicans supporting such an effort.

Finally, ever since the NAFTA fight, a group of Washington nationalists has met privately to coordinate their common opposition to the trade deals pushed by Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich. The frequency of the meetings varies depending on the legislative calendar, with regular conclaves held during this summer's battle over Most Favored Nation status for China, and about every two weeks during the debate over fast track. The meetings are held over lunch, at Capitol Hill restaurants like The Monocle, La Brazzerie, and America at Union Station. Attendees have included staffers for Democratic House Whip David Bonior, aides to Republican Duncan Hunter, anti-free trade Alabama Republican Congressman Terry Everett, and Senator Jesse Helms. Joining them have been representatives from the Sierra Club, Public Citizen, the World Wildlife Fund, the Environmental Defense Fund, Eagle Forum, the AFL-CIO, the Teamsters, an aide to Buchanan, and people associated with Perot. While their coalition has not broadened beyond trade and sovereignty, it has helped bring to the center of American politics a set of issues that undermine the existing alliances on which both major parties depend. As an aide to one nationalist Republican Congressman puts it: "This issue is up for grabs. There are people in both parties who would like to grab it and people in both parties who are scared out of their wits by it."

The nationalist convergence remains immature. It boasts prominent personalities, but lacks a guiding institution. Its different constituencies disagree about a great deal, retain lingering suspicions of one another, and are themselves excluded from the leadership of the two major parties. But on fast track, they have, for the first time, punctured the free-market internationalist consensus that has dominated American politics since the end of the cold war. Many things that seemed inevitable last week no longer do. And a lot of powerful people went to bed on Sunday night afraid of what they might wake up to. •

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Isaiah Berlin, 1909-1997.

"When a sage dies, all are his kin"

By Leon Wieseltier

I.

"When a sage dies," says the Talmud, "all are his kin."

The rabbis were speaking practically, not philosophically. They were ruling that, when a sage dies, everyone must observe some of the practices of mourning. When a sage dies, for example, all must rend their garments. "But do you really think that all are his kin?" the text asks itself, incredulously. For all are obviously not his kin. It is a big world. The injunction seems sentimental, onerous. "So say, rather, that all are *like* his kin." A distinction! But it is not enough of a distinction to release anybody from the duty to mourn.

And if you never knew the man, if you never sat in the dust at his feet, if you never heard him teach? Still he is not a stranger. The Talmud proceeds to the story of the death of Rabbi Safra, a scholar and a merchant of the fourth century. "When Rabbi Safra died, the rabbis did not rend their garments, because they said: 'We did not study with him ourselves.' But Abbaye said to them: 'Does it say "when your master dies"? No, it says "when a sage dies"! Besides, every day in the house of study we consider his views.' " If you know the teaching, you know the teacher. You are required to rend.

In Oxford, last week, a sage died. And every day in the house of study we consider his views. Who are Isaiah Berlin's kin, who must mourn?

II.

The pluralists are his kin, and they must mourn.

Isaiah Berlin was the most original, the most lucid, the most erudite, and the most relentless enemy of the idea of totality in his age, which was an age of totality. More precisely, an age of failed totality; and it owed that failure, which was the late and saving glory of an inglorious modernity, not least to the notions of this professor and his crowded, benevolent mind. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that the belief that some single formula can in principle be found whereby all the diverse ends of men can be harmoniously realized is demonstrably false." The geniality of the statement should not obscure the scale of the claim. It is the language of a don, but it is the conception of a world-historical thinker. What made him a world-historical thinker was his assault on the idea of the world-historical.

From Parmenides to Marx, philosophers dreamed of the single principle, the single method, the single being, metaphysical or anti-metaphysical, sacred or profane, that would account for everything that exists, and bring everything that exists under a single description. Berlin set out to awaken Western thought from that dream. His lifelong analysis of the ideal of wholeness exposed it as a dangerous illusion. But he did not repudiate it only on moral and political grounds. He carried the criticism of totality beyond the criticism of totalitarianism, back to the elementary consideration of its philosophical sense. He showed that it had no philosophical sense.

"In the house of history," he wrote, "there are many mansions." But the force of Berlin's attack on holism in all its forms was owed to the fact that it was not only a historical attack, it was also a logical attack. It is commonly assumed that his defense of pluralism was the work of his years as a political thinker and a historian of ideas, but in fact Berlin's quarrel with totality originated in his early papers, in the Oxford-style exercises in analytical philosophy that he later liked to disavow. "I could not bring myself to re-read them," he said about these writings; but it was in his animadversions against logical positivism that he began to suggest what is preposterous about "the infallible knowledge of incorrigible propositions," and "the Ionian fallacy of asking what everything is made of," and "the privileged class of basic propositions ... and the desire to translate all other propositions into them or combinations of them...." It was logic that made Berlin a liberal.

For Berlin, pluralism was not a conclusion drawn prudently from experience, a kind and expedient concession to the obstacles that life puts in the way of the right and the good. Rather, pluralism was a conclusion drawn from a proper analysis of concepts, from a strict reflection about the nature of human values and human goods, which are essentially incompatible, not just empirically incompatible, with one another. "The notion of a total human fulfillment is a formal contradiction." A formal contradiction: Is there a greater

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curse upon an idea? But this was the curse that Berlin cast upon the idea of totality, and may the idea never escape the curse. It was Berlin who demonstrated that the illiberal view of the world was not only an evil, it was also an error; that the liberal view of the world is not only a practical necessity, it is also a theoretical necessity. If society must be pluralist, it is because reality is plural; because pluralism is what there is.

Berlin was one of liberalism's great foundationalists, and his writings will stand as a permanent embarrassment to those who believe that justice can dispense with philosophy. The pluralism that he preached was not a gospel of relaxation. "If, as I believe, the ends of men are many, and not all of them are in principle compatible with each other, then the possibility of conflict—and of tragedy—can never be wholly eliminated from human life, either personal or social." The strife and the sorrow of which Berlin warned might wrack the same society, the same culture, the same individual. Pluralism promises peace, not serenity. But Berlin kindled to the friction. He prized the shadows of the Many over the darkness of the One; for it is darkness, and not light, that the One generally vouchsafes. He had an almost aesthetic relationship to the heterogeneity that he championed. In his work and in his person, he demonstrated that the world of the Many is a more enchanted world, not a less enchanted world, than the world of the One. In this way, Berlin made a fruitful contribution to the idea of happiness.

III.

The rationalists are his kin, and they must mourn.

The rationalists? Surely not the rationalists. For it was Berlin, was it not, who shook the confidence of reason, and denied that reason was immune to time and to place, and denounced the rationalism of the Enlightenment as an indefensible absolutism? Yes, it was Berlin. But something has gone a little awry in the appreciation of his work in recent years. Some people think that they have detected in "value-pluralism" and the "incommensurability thesis" endorsements of the miserable flight from reason that characterizes so much of contemporary intellectual life. Thus, one reads that "there is in Berlin's idea of radical choice arising from conflicts among incommensurables a decisionist, voluntarist, or existentialist element." Berlin's attack on absolutes has been taken to imply relativism, or subjectivism, or perspectivism, or even a quaint postmodernism.

This is all exaggerated and imprecise. There is not a whiff of *fumisme* in Berlin, not a touch of Fichte or Sartre. "We seek to adjust the unadjustable, we do the best we can," but we do not do so gratuitously, or helplessly, or in the service only of our interests. The hero of Berlin's epic of the collision of ends is a deliberative hero, whose choices are rational, or at least reasonable, and merit praise or blame. He does not despair of coherence or truth. Berlin's point is not that reason has been retired by irony or by will; it is that reason dictates many things, and comes with costs. It was not against reason that Berlin inveighed, it was against the church of rationalism (or the temple of Sarastro, as he liked to call it); and it was reason, not unreason, that he pitted against rationalism's dogmas. When "Herder and the Enlightenment," his extraordinary essay of 1964, was reprinted last year in a new collection of his writings, Berlin added a note in which he described Herder's standpoint, which was also his own standpoint, as "objective pluralism." It was not one of his magical formulations, but it suffices to establish that he offers no comfort to the cheerful obscurers.

What is "objective pluralism"? It is the view that a pluralist world is a porous world, that societies and cultures and minds are not so shut up within themselves that meaningful communication among them, or meaningful comparison between them, is impossible ("it is idle to tell men to learn to see other worlds through the eyes of those whom they seek to understand, if they are prevented by the walls of their own culture from doing so"); and also the view that each of these societies and cultures and minds may be evaluated by logical and moral categories that apply across them all. About relativism, Berlin wrote that "I take it to mean a doctrine according to which the judgment of a man or a group, since it is the expression of a taste, or emotional attitude or outlook, is simply what it is, with no objective correlate that determines its truth or falsehood." And this he rejected. He would not countenance the ideal of an islanded existence. It made the study of different forms of life and ancient forms of life and primitive forms of life impossible. Is "objectivity," then, another term for universalism? Berlin did not speak keenly of universalism, and in his writings he often identified it with what a historian once called "uniformitarianism." But really he abhorred only a coercive universalism (and its incarnation on earth, communism). He was a universalist of the multiformitarian kind.

What bothered Berlin about rationalism was its insulation. This was especially true of rationalism in Oxford, as he recalled it in an elegiac but devastating memoir of J.L. Austin. For nothing was more vivid to Berlin than the reality of an idea; the external reality as well as the internal reality. A particular idea occurred in a particular time and a particular place. This did not mean that the idea was contingent, or nothing more than an expression of the individual who thought it. It might be a necessary idea; but even necessary ideas do not think themselves. An abstract conception is voluptuously actual. A thought is an experience. Berlin did not become a historian of ideas because he believed that ideas are nothing but history. His historicism was a way of making reason worldly; or of acting on the rude and marvelous discovery that reason already was worldly, even when it pretended otherwise.

It was not only for its more various picture of the human that Berlin kept returning to what he called the counter-Enlightenment. He was on a mission. He was a

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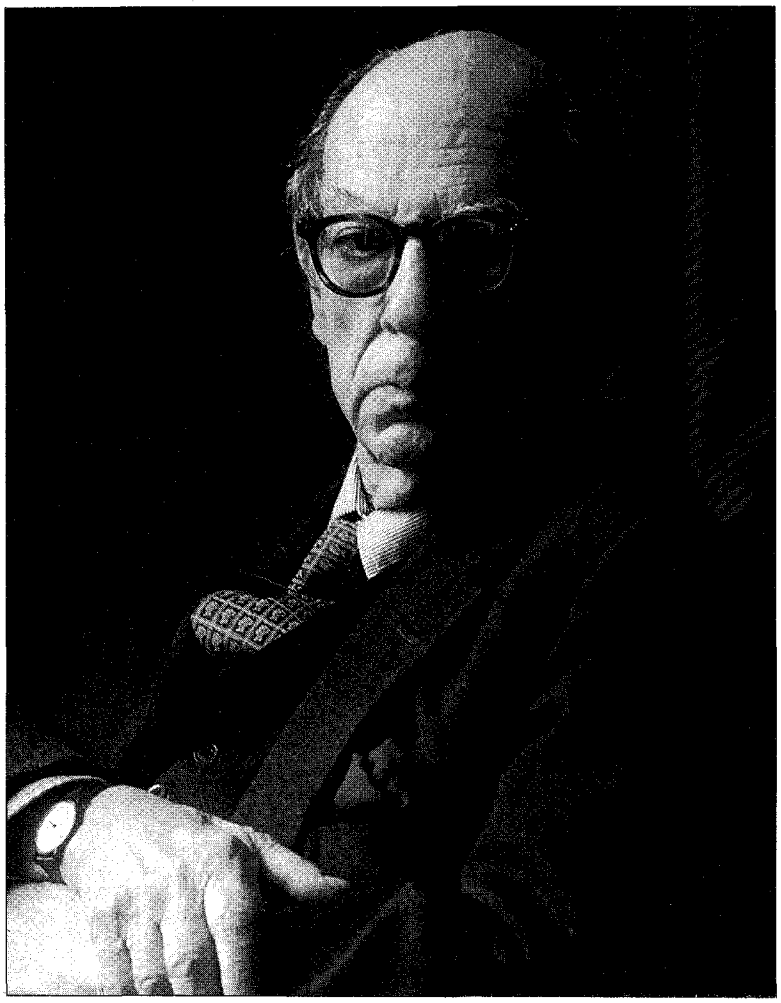
spy for reason in the house of unreason. (His studies in the history of romanticism and reaction were the most important cables that he ever wrote.) He needed all the dank and complicating information, if he was to get on with the unapologetically progressive task of understanding the conditions for the development of personality and decency. He belongs in the small and valorous company of rationalists who did not flinch before the facticity of unreason, who knew that reason cripples itself when it regards only itself, who taught reason sympathy.

IV.

The democrats are his kin, and they must mourn.

Berlin criticized classical rationalism as much for some of its effects as for some of its assumptions. He showed that, even in its nobler versions, it often culminated in a sanctimonious and sometimes murderous authoritarianism. "One belief, more than any other, is responsible for the slaughter of individuals on the altars of the great historical ideals—justice or progress or the happiness of future generations, or the sacred mission or emancipation of a nation or race or class, or even liberty itself, which demands the sacrifice of individuals for the freedom of society. This is the belief that somewhere, in the past or in the future, in divine revelation or in the mind of an individual thinker, in the pronouncements of history or science, or in the simple heart of an uncorrupted good man, there is a final solution." A final solution: the phrase recurs often in Berlin's studies of Western thought, and he saw no need to remark upon its chill.



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Was it really a surfeit of reason from which this century suffered? Of course not. But this was not Berlin's claim. He was warning, rather, of the perversion of reason. He admired the power of the mind to understand, but he feared the power of the mind to unify; and he was adamant that unifying was not the same as understanding. It was plain to him that the crimes of his century were the crimes of monism, and he toiled to make this plain to others. In political theory, monism took the form of what he called "positive liberty." He was against it; it was a fancy invitation to compulsion, a theory of authority disguised as a theory of freedom. Freedom for, freedom to: this kind of freedom was a demand for a prescription for a way to live, and it defined freedom as conformity to such a prescription, as obedience. Berlin maintained, against Lenin but also against Kant, that freedom was not obedience, that it was the obstreperous antithesis of conformity.

Freedom was not general, it was individual. In his appraisal of political ideas and political systems, Berlin never took his eyes off "the empirical spatio-temporal existence of the finite individual." For this reason, he became the unvatic prophet of "negative liberty." This he defined as "a maximum degree of non-interference compatible with the minimum demands of social life." In Berlin's hands, the homely ideal of non-interference was homely no more. It was transformed into philosophy's powerful weapon against despotism. Berlin gave it grandeur: "It seems unlikely that this extreme demand for liberty has ever been made by any but a small company of highly civilized and self-conscious human beings." Or, a little morbidly, it may be that the objective of the struggle for freedom, of the longest and bloodiest struggle in human history, was nothing more magnificent than the right to be left alone.

Berlin was himself one of those highly civilized and self-conscious human beings. He, too, imagined the reign of respect, the paradise of no paradise. He was the heir in his time of Mill and Constant. He simply and truly detested determinisms. He did not deny that power was legitimate (though he discussed anarchism with glee, and took a wicked pleasure in contrasting Marx unfavorably to Bakunin); but he demanded that power be legitimate, and he propounded an exceedingly stringent criterion for its legitimacy. He was not a libertarian, and he criticized "the evils of unrestricted

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laissez-faire, and of the social and legal systems that permitted and encouraged it, [that] led to brutal violations of 'negative' liberty"; but he criticized collectivism more. (In 1917, as a boy in Petrograd, he watched the Russian Revolution.) "Genuine belief in the inviolability of a minimum extent of individual liberty," he wrote, "entails [an] absolute stand." This, from the master anti-absolutist! But there was nothing paradoxical about this stand. It was the corollary of his consecration.

Berlin's writings display in abundance the natural democracy of the contrapuntal mind. He was not a party man or a fisher of souls. With his friend Lionel Trilling, he believed that "a criticism which has at heart the interests of liberalism might find its most useful work not in confirming liberalism in its sense of general rightness but rather in putting under some degree of pressure the liberal ideas and assumptions of the present time." Berlin did not exempt liberals and democrats from the fairness and the candor of his judgment. The conflation of freedom with power by modern revolutionaries, he observed, "has, perhaps, blinded some contemporary liberals to the world in which they live. Their plea is clear, their cause is just. But they do not allow for the variety of human needs. Nor yet for the ingenuity with which men can prove to their satisfaction that the road to one ideal also leads to its contrary." He was wise in part because he was not ingenious.

V.

The nationalists are his kin, and they must mourn.

Not all the nationalists, no. Berlin was withering about the low side of belonging, about "the pathological developments of nationalism in our own time," about "modern national narcissism: the self-adoration of peoples, of their conviction of their own immeasurable superiority to others and consequent right to dominate them." He carefully delineated the debt that fascism and other outrages of collective will owed to romanticism. He was alienated by the celebration of the organic and the mythological that characterizes, and inflames, nationalist thinking and nationalist feeling. And yet he was not prepared to follow his faith in individualism all the way to an internationalist conclusion. He was sharply critical of liberals and socialists for having scanted the reality, and the validity, and the durability, of group feeling.

Berlin had two reasons for lingering over nationalism. The first was his indignation at injustice. In his view, nationalism almost always originated as an effort at redress, as an attempt to right a wrong. "It usually seems to be caused by wounds." In response to oppression and exploitation, a people desires recognition and independence. Not to understand such desires, and the solidarity out of which they arise, is to be morally obtuse, or worse. "The consciousness that although all oppression is hateful, yet to be ordered about by a man of my own community or nation, or class or culture or religion, humiliates me less than if it is done by strangers . . . that sentiment is surely intelligible enough." Nationalism, in Berlin's wonderful phrase, is "the straightening of bent backs."

But this is a purely reactive account of nationalism, and a purely political one; and for Berlin it did not suffice. The second reason for his interest in nationalism was his interest in the world as it is. For there *are* nations, formed or forming, stateless or in states, with languages, traditions, customs, institutions, and beliefs of their own. Regardless of what theory has to say about it, the human world is already so constituted and so diversified. Berlin's nationalism was an expression of his humanism. As a matter of principle, he dignified human needs and human aspirations. And the past was philosophically significant for him. The sphere of freedom that Berlin described was not a stripped and empty shell, and he did not seek to secure it for the purpose of Nietzschean melodrama. He did not require people to create themselves and their meanings. Identities are not only invented, they are also inherited; and they are invented out of what is inherited. Berlin never recoiled from the involuntary dimensions of life. This supremely unmystical man warmly invoked "the nation as a society of the living, the dead, and those yet unborn (sinister as this could prove to be when driven to a point of pathological exacerbation)."

He was the great teacher of liberal nationalism, which is surely one of the urgent teachings of our time. Berlin revered Mazzini. "True internationalism must be based on mutual regard and respect between nations. To have internationalism you must have nations." And those nations must be held to common standards of right and wrong. Is this universalism? It is. "No culture that we know lacks the notions of good and bad. There are universal values." The ethical trumps the ethnic. But Berlin's liberal nationalism was not only a brake upon the thralldom of the group to the nation. It was also a brake upon the thralldom of the individual to the nation. Berlin did not agree that nationalism required the immersion of the individual in the group. "Total harmony with others is incompatible with self-identity." There is dignity in membership; but in partial membership. Partial membership is still profound. The part is precious, but it must not be mistaken for the whole. The participation in shared traditions is an important element in the cultivation of personality, until it becomes its only element, and then it leads to the degradation of personality. Berlin prized authenticity, except ideologically.

The most deeply felt essay in the history of ideas that he wrote, I think, was his essay on Moses Hess, and these are the most deeply felt words in the essay:

> Through his most extreme and radical beliefs there persists a conviction that there is never any duty to maim or impoverish oneself for the sake of an abstract ideal; that nobody can, or should, be required to vivisect himself, to throw away that which affords him the deepest spiritual satisfaction known to human beings—the right to self-expression, to

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personal relationships, to the love of familiar places or forms of life, of beautiful things, or the roots and symbols of one's own, or one's family, or one's nation's past. He believed that nobody should be made to sacrifice his own individual pattern of the unanalyzable relationships—the central emotional or intellectual experiences—of which human lives are compounded, to offer them up, even as a temporary expedient, for the sake of some tidy solution, deduced from abstract and impersonal premises, some form of life derived from an alien source, imposed upon men by artificial means, and felt to be the mechanical application of some general rule to a concrete situation for which it was not made. All that Hess, toward the end of his life, wrote or said, rests on the assumption that to deny what inwardly one knows to be true, to do violence to the facts for whatever tactical or doctrinal motive, is at once degrading and doomed to futility.

Berlin was a creature of loyalties, and he expounded a critical philosophy of loyalty. He lived a dutiful, polycentric, generous, and unidolatrous life. "I remain totally loyal to Britain, to Oxford, to liberalism, to Israel," he remarked. He was, you might say, a rootful Jewish cosmopolitan, and so the most blessed of men.

VI.

The Jews were his kin, and they must mourn.

He was a happy Zionist. "The origins of Zionism were very civilized and Herderian," he observed, meaning that his own nationalism had the same philosophical ground as the nationalism of others. It was owed also to his understanding of history, to his awareness of an emergency, to "the realization (it seems destined to come, late or soon, to almost every Jewish social thinker, whatever his views), that the Jewish problem is something *sui generis*, and seems to need a specific solution of its own, since it resists the solvent of even the most powerful universal panaceas." But Berlin's Zionism was not just an intellectual's Zionism. It was a bias of his heart. The sensation of peoplehood never deserted him. He vibrated to his patrimony.

Not to all of it, though. He was rather indifferent to Judaism as a religion, and rather ignorant about it, even if he liked to remind you that he was a cousin of the Lubavitcher *rebbe*. (The messiah would have profited from his cousin's thoughts about messianism in history.) He never quite overcame the Zionist condescension toward Yiddish. And in Jewish politics there was much that he would not accept. He condemned the chauvinists and the jingoists in the Zionist movement and in the Jewish State. (When asked about the Arabs who oppose Israel, he replied that "understanding people who oppose us is what Herder taught us." Consider that first "us," and then that second "us," and you will have the whole man.) And yet, as a Jew, Berlin was free, glad, open, busy, grateful, and utterly without anxiety. His past made him feel princely, as it should have. There was our exilarch, in Oxford; and there he is buried.

And those for whom he was not only a sage but also a master, those who sat in the dust at his feet—they, too, must mourn, for they are the mourners who will remember the teacher and not just the teaching. They will remember him in his all gentleness and all his gaiety, in his uncanny ability to see through them, and with sweetness and severity to explain them to themselves. They will remember him at the big white door, how delighted he was to see them, and how delighted they were that he was delighted to see them. They will remember him slouched in his chair by the fire, telling tales of what he had seen and what he had heard, singing "Rachel, quand du Seigneur" or "A un dottor della mia sorte," imparting to them all that he had satisfied himself was true, until they were emboldened to think that they, too, might become a link in the chain. (He was indeed an unforgettable talker; but it was *what* he said that was unforgettable.) They will remember him

> . . . . unvexed, unwarped
> By partial bondage. In his steady course,
> No piteous revolutions had he felt,
> No wild varieties of joy and grief.
> Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
> His heart lay open; and, by nature tuned
> And constant disposition of his thoughts
> To sympathy with man, he was alive
> To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
> And all that was endured; for, in himself
> Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
> He had no painful pressure from within
> That made him turn aside from wretchedness
> With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer
> With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
> That in our best experience he was rich,
> And in the wisdom of our daily life.

They will remember him, and their mourning will rend them.

"When a sage dies, all are his kin." A dispute is recorded between the last great rabbis of Germany in the Middle Ages, Meir ben Baruch of Rothenberg and his student Asher ben Jehiel. Meir leniently ruled that you mourn for a sage "if you know the ideas that he introduced, but if you know none of the ideas that he introduced, and he was not your master, then you are not required to rend when you hear the news after the funeral, since you do not [as Abbaye said] consider his views in the house of study every day." Asher stringently demurred, likewise in the name of Abbaye: "Does it say 'when your master dies'? No, it says 'when a sage dies'!" And so there is no reprieve from mourning. In 1286, when the Hapsburg emperor acted on the official view of the Jews as "serfs of Our Chamber," and promulgated capricious and punitive policies of taxation, Meir and his family attempted to leave Germany, but he was informed upon and imprisoned, and he died in the dungeon seven years later. In 1303, to avoid the fate of his teacher, Asher left Germany for Spain. About the mourning for a sage, they disagreed; but they agreed, certainly, that unreason was impending and wisdom was escaping. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Scheming, Then and Now

One reason that Henry James's novels are so often adapted for the screen is that he was a dandy plotter. Character, insight, profound themes, yes, yes, OK, but those *plots*. So neatly engineered. *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Washington Square* are, in rarefied form, the work of a writer who knew the fount of neat plotting, the melodramatic theater of his time. James's own plays failed, but his feeling for the stage never waned. (See *The Tragic Muse* and his volume of theater criticism.) When he returned to New York in 1904 after living abroad for 20 years, he sought out the Bowery Theater where he had once gorged on melodrama. That affinity, transmuted by genius, runs through his work.

Here now is **The Wings of The Dove** (Miramax), borne on a plot that, fundamentally, comes right from the Bowery Theater. Kate Croy and Merton Densher, Londoners, want to marry, but her rich aunt, who holds the purse strings, disapproves of the impecunious Merton. Along comes a young American woman, Milly Theale, really wealthy and really ill. Kate encourages Merton to court Milly so that the ill woman will marry him and, dying soon thereafter, leave him money. Then Kate's aunt will accept Merton as Kate's husband. The plot thickens, then thins.

The screenplay by Hossein Amini doesn't shrink James as my synopsis does, but it pays scant heed to one of James's chief concerns, the character of Milly; and it rearranges—but doesn't prettify—the ending. The sketchiness of Milly isn't helped by the pallid performance of Alison Elliott. Merton and Kate are much more fully drawn and vividly acted. Linus Roache, who was the protagonist of *Priest*, gives Merton tenacity and residual pride. Helena Bonham Carter, familiar from *A Room with a View* and *Howards End* and more, continues glowingly to advance. Her acting grows in flexibility and fire. Here she suggests an immediate wholeness of character, which she then goes on to substantiate.

This is the third feature directed by Iain Softley. (His first was *Backbeat*, about the fifth Beatle.) Softley worries a bit, quite unnecessarily, about keeping our interest; so he lays in a number of overhead shots and considerable zooming at the start of sequences. But his work with his cast is sure, except for the miscast Elliott, and he generates the right internal heat between the lovers. Eduardo Serra, the cinematographer who did *Jude*, understands how the texture of wood paneling and textiles can contribute to a film.

Sean Mathias, another Englishman, also worries too much. Directing his first feature, **Bent** (Goldwyn), Mathias fusses a good deal before he settles down effectively to work. In this he is abetted by Martin Sherman, who wrote the screenplay from his own play. (Mathias directed the original production, in London.) The subject is the suffering of gay German men under the Nazis, and the crux is the relationship of two prisoners in a labor camp. One wears the pink triangle of the homosexual, the other wears the yellow Star of David though he, too, is gay.

This relationship—between two men who are forbidden to speak to each other, to touch each other, who simply slave together every day pointlessly moving rocks—is schemingly, painfully realized. The two actors, Clive Owen and Lothaire Bluteau, have fully imagined the horror and the horrible comedy of their situation, and Mathias has tuned them in a grotesque yet delicate duet.

But Sherman has written a long prelude to the camp section, with wild nightclub scenes in Berlin, with orgies in overdecorated apartments. This material is meant to establish the background in (let's call it) Isherwood's Berlin before the Hitler *putsch* against homosexuals that began with the murder of Ernst Roehm. This material is also intended to pad out the film. When *Bent* resolves into the labor camp scenes, the film acquires a tacit heroism. The first half or so, lushly presented, seems all the more superfluous as the second half takes hold.

> It is not the fault of our doctors that the medical service of the community, as at present provided for, is a murderous obscenity. That any sane nation, having observed that you could provide for the supply of bread by giving bakers a pecuniary interest in baking for you, should go on to give a surgeon a pecuniary interest in cutting off your leg, is enough to make one despair of political humanity.

These words, published in 1911, are the opening of Bernard Shaw's preface to his play *The Doctor's Dilemma*. Sidney

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Beaumarchais, the Scoundrel. *Rococo flurry in this account of the author of* The Barber of Seville *and* The Marriage of Figaro. *Never scintillating, frequently fun. (Reviewed 11/17/97).* **Boogie Nights.** *Paul Thomas Anderson's large treatment of a squalid subject, the making of porno flicks in L.A. in the 1970s. So intensely done that it touches deep currents underneath. (11/10/97).* **In the Company of Men.** *First-class. Modeled on Restoration comedy, it follows a cruel prank by two yuppies on a young woman—and the unexpected results. Sharp writing, directing, acting. (9/1/97).* **Mrs. Brown.** *What did Queen Victoria actually do with her Scottish groom John Brown? No possible answer, here or anywhere else, but lots of lively investigation. (8/4/97).*—**SK**

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Lumet directed a New York production of the play in 1955; and those prefatory words could serve as epigraph to his new film **Critical Care** (Live Entertainment).

With a screenplay by Steven B. Schwartz based on a book by Richard Dooling, Lumet, always sensitive to social issues, tackles the subject of the financial interests of hospitals. The chief setting is the intensive care unit of a big urban hospital where a young resident (James Spader) gets entangled in a scheme about a comatose elderly patient. The patient's daughters, half-sisters, are competing for the old man's estate, and the date of his death is a determinant.

This idea, because foolishly characterized, is not the basis of a serious film. It's either low melodrama or low farce, a choice that Lumet never makes. Add to this indecision the fact that the clearest statements of theme, about medicine and money, come from a half-soused elderly medical officer in the hospital (Albert Brooks). Add, too, that there are symbolic appearances of emissaries from heaven and hell—Wallace Shawn as an imp, Anne Bancroft as a mysterious nun—and the film begins to spin dizzyingly. Add to *that* the seduction of Spader by one of the half-sisters, Kyra Sedgwick, that is a cartoon sequence by a cartoon character, also add a *scène à faire* at a legal conference that couldn't be more hollow, and you're left wondering what Lumet's basic plan was in this picture. He has occasionally chosen poor scripts (e.g., *Running on Empty*), but his intent was clear. Here he wobbles back and forth from mode to mode and ends by diminishing the point of it all—the present relation between medical care and money.

Even so, Lumet's touch with actors is occasionally clear. He gets from Helen Mirren a much-needed authenticity as head nurse of the ICU. And from Edward Herrmann, as the hospital's chief lawyer, he gets velvet-covered iron. •

Jed Perl on Art

Transformations

A painting is a wall turning into a window, one reality dissolving into another, a *there* becoming a *here*, a vision made concrete. Some artists want us to experience these magical transformations as if nature were revealing itself, but others believe that the very abstractness of the process pulls us in. The distinction between the representational and the nonrepresentational is not really the issue, for by now we realize that the frescoes of Piero della Francesca leave a stronger sense of the abstractness of experience than does Kandinsky in his *Improvisations*, where there is an almost naturalistic inevitability to the mingling of colors and the fluidity of forms. What really counts, what has become the do-or-die issue for painters, is the belief in painting as one thing becoming another—and the knowledge that it is technique that makes the transformations manifest, whether it is a matter of paint making light, or composition crystallizing movement, or discrete objects combining to create overarching patterns.

Such technical questions may be regarded as professional secrets, best left to the studio or the classroom. But anybody who has seen how a beautifully painted surface can summon up a dream has found painting's heartbeat; and that is the pulse that a lot of people are looking for when they go to the galleries. Museumgoers who keep tabs on contemporary art are aware, of course, that painting is now marginalized, out-of-fashion, and (according to some) near death. The wildly enthusiastic response to the Robert Rauschenberg retrospective at the Guggenheim this fall suggests that for many people his collagist sensibility is just the kind of everything-but-the-kitchen-sink measure that is needed to keep painting alive. But a feeling that painting is besieged can also sharpen an appetite for the self-generating power of an art that can create light, movement, and transformation without recourse to the electronic gizmos that Rauschenberg pioneered.

With painters feeling very much on the defensive, there are a lot of serious artists who would agree that the time has come to give technical secrets a public presence, and turn the artist's underlying issues into an explicit subject. Cora Cohen, whose paintings were at Jason McCoy this fall, is an abstractionist who knows how to tap into the hunger for the possibilities of paint. She has a luxuriantly idiosyncratic way of letting the paint spill across the canvas, running color into color, thin over thick, after which she'll blot out light with dark and use powdered pigment to dust the dark with another, lighter tone. Her compositions, in which the spills, the drips, the rivulets, and the brushings create a pewter-and-gold, Tiepolo-sky atmosphere, have an immediate impact. They are nonobjective evocations of catalytic encounters, of alchemical alterations. But there is something programmatic about Cohen's heedlessness, and this kind of self-conscious impetuosity is a troubling development among painters of Cohen's embattled generation. Cohen is almost too interested in allowing her materials—which include an eclectic range of oils, acrylics, resins, and powdered pigments—to intermingle on the canvas and work their own magic. She takes painting's pulse, all right, but hearing the heartbeat seems to have become her dangerous obsession.

Of course, if you want to see an artist who is a magician, many people would point you to the Guggenheim, where Rauschenberg has been given what may well be the biggest retrospective of a contemporary artist ever mounted in New York. "You want transformations?" Rauschenberg seems to say. "I'll give you transformations!" This show goes on forever, through every level of the Frank Lloyd Wright building, upstairs and downstairs at the Guggenheim SoHo, and (as if that weren't enough) the museum has temporarily annexed the Ace Gallery, a commercial space on Hudson Street. (The exhibition, which was organized by Walter Hopps and Susan Davidson of the Menil Collection in Houston, will travel there in early 1998, and then go on to Europe.)

No doubt about it, Rauschenberg knows how to get the public all hot and bothered; and though he makes his appeal as a mixed-media kind of guy, he is for all intents and purposes a painter, whose main concern is with making something happen on a two-dimensional surface. In 1955, he turned a patchwork quilt and a pillow into a painting called *Bed*. Some still count this his signal achievement, but *Bed* is eventually forgotten at the Guggenheim in the onslaught of walls that become mirrors, which are overlaid with photographs which turn them into windows. Rauschenberg's silk-screened extravaganzas have lowest-common-denominator appeal, and they give museumgoers a post-Dadaist equivalent to nineteenth-century sharp-focus Salon realism.

Rauschenberg established himself in New York in the mid-1950s, when Abstract Expressionism was already deep

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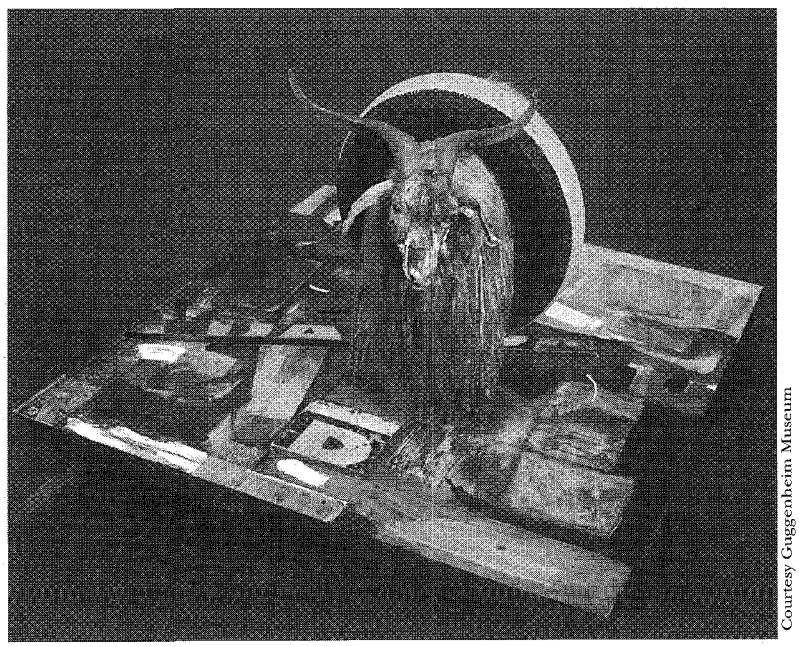
in crisis. An art which Hans Hofmann a decade earlier had spoken of in terms of a struggle "to transform the material with which [the artist] works back into the sphere of the spirit" seemed to offer an ever narrower space for development. It was a time when there seemed less and less possibility for mimesis, metaphor, and metamorphosis. You might say that our current dilemma has its origin in that period, when the literalness of a painted surface began to look like a be-all-and-end-all, and Rauschenberg was hailed as an artist who could put the metaphors back in with his found-object assemblages.

If Rauschenberg offers one starting-out-in-the-'50s story, Richard Diebenkorn, who is the subject of a retrospective that has opened at the Whitney Museum of American Art, offers another. At the Whitney, I am carried along by the elegant deliberation with which Diebenkorn engineers his own kind of escape from Abstract Expressionism. He will paint a window that opens onto a landscape that becomes a kind of abstraction; and later, abstractions in which the horizontals, verticals, and diagonals almost invariably suggest a landscape framed by a window. (The Diebenkorn show, which was organized by Jane Livingston, travels to Fort Worth, Washington, and San Francisco.)

Few artists have less in common than Robert Rauschenberg and Richard Diebenkorn. Diebenkorn, who died in 1993, is widely regarded as a noble outsider. He was born in Portland, Oregon in 1922, moved to San Francisco as a child, and worked in California all his life. There he cultivated a refined painterly touch and an abiding interest in life-drawing that can seem far removed from the concerns of most of his blue-chip contemporaries. Rauschenberg, who at 72 spends most of his time on an island off the coast of Florida, is described in glossy magazine profiles as a silver-haired beachcomber with a golden touch that can turn anything into one of his trademark give-'em-a-little-controlled-chaos visual products. Rauschenberg is famous for having erased a drawing that he was given by de Kooning for that express purpose. Diebenkorn is famous for having never stopped believing in drawing. You could go on describing their differences, but it's also worth pointing out that Diebenkorn began to reexamine nature in the late '50s, a few years after Rauschenberg started doing his Combines. Both careers suggest a love-hate relationship with Abstract Expressionism.

Both Rauschenberg and Diebenkorn built major reputations out of their reactions to the unresolved conflicts of the '50s, and since we see the seeds of our conflicts in those conflicts, their retrospectives can have an almost nerve-wracking relevance. The literalness of Abstract Expressionism had a way of making metaphor seem like apostasy. If you changed paint into something else, would you still end up with a painting? To be a mainstream artist—which is what Diebenkorn and Rauschenberg are—is to worry about that question. What too often passes for a serious engagement with painting is just stylish anxiety about the dangers of transforming paint too much. That's basically all that goes on in the new canvases by Terry Winters, webby compositions in icy, retro colors, that are at the Matthew Marks Gallery this fall. Winters has come to be regarded as a major painter in New York. He fills his canvases with cagelike overlays of lines that have a nostalgic-futuristic feel. His paintings are a fantasy of distance and complexity, but he gives them such a clotted painterly look that I feel sure he doesn't believe in the spaces that he is diagramming. He invokes a dream, but only to advise us that the dream has died.

The Abstract Expressionists pulled emotion out of paint's intractability, out of its insistence on being nothing but itself, and what is most heartfelt in Richard Diebenkorn's work, especially in his work of the '50s and '60s, originates in that ponderous but exciting emotional climate. San Francisco, where Diebenkorn was a student in the '40s, was an outpost of the New York School. Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still were presences then, teaching at the California School of Fine Arts, and Diebenkorn absorbed the period's impassioned feeling for the studio, where painting was as natural as breathing. Diebenkorn's immersion in life drawing should not be thought to have been an anomaly in the '60s. While representational work was surely not what one tended to see in the most sophisticated galleries, New York artists such as Leland Bell, Nell Blaine, and Fairfield Porter were as engaged by the natural world as Diebenkorn, David Park, and James Weeks were in San Francisco, and the New Yorkers persisted in the face of a more coherent and powerful opposition.



Courtesy Guggenheim Museum

MONOGRAM, 1955-59, BY ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

Diebenkorn is at his best when he is forthrightly, intuitively expressionistic. His most affecting images are probably some figure drawings, where he catches the angsty '60s sensuality of women with endless legs and slouching hats worn for bohemian effect. The Bay Area is a wonderful visual subject that has never received its due, and in certain drawings of women lounging on daybeds in shadowy interiors and in some small, thickly painted landscapes, Diebenkorn catches this Northern California paradise, with its fine old redwood houses and slowed-down rhythms. Not enough of these smaller works are in the show, which is too bad, because when Diebenkorn reaches for related effects in the bigger paintings that dominate the earlier galleries at the Whitney, the snug mix of port city and university town that gives these paintings their Bay Area aura evaporates, leaving a smattering of crude, arbitrary effects.

The big landscape and figure paintings lack a convincing internal scale. Diebenkorn will zero in on an angled edge or an odd form or a dramatic bit of light, but he has no idea how to work such elements into a larger, part-to-whole flow. He thinks that he can pull everything together with dramatically abstracted planes of dark-toned color, but the result is that the more naturalistic passages are landlocked. His figures are wedged in, his landscapes collapse.

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Many people believe that Diebenkorn achieved a delicate emotional fullness in the increasingly thinly painted and unabashedly abstract *Ocean Park* paintings, which he began after relocating to Los Angeles in the late '60s. Here Diebenkorn's fascination with Matisse becomes obsessive. Many of the compositions are almost line-for-line quotations from Matisse's work of the 1912-18 period, including the *Piano Lesson* and several of the Moroccan paintings. In place of the Frenchman's radical classicism, though, Diebenkorn can offer only a stripped-down romantic existentialism. What is astringency in Matisse becomes indecision in Diebenkorn. He doesn't know how to build a composition. In the best of the *Ocean Park* series, Diebenkorn may get a little something goin in the upper corners, but the middle of these paintings tends to be directionless, and they don't conclude at the bottom so much as just peter out.

Diebenkorn only did one fully resolved large-scale painting, the 1967 *Window*. There is a grave lyricism to this composition, with its folding chair, unadorned balcony, stark urban view, and unusual green-and-orange palette. This is a painting about a wall that is a window, through which we see other walls, and a sky that is a kind of wall, too. The chair has a metaphoric resonance. Unfolding in space, this piece of simple metal furniture provides a place for a person to sit and take in the unfolding view. It's a triumphantly succinct composition.

Diebenkorn rarely achieves coherence, but *Window* is the work of a painter who knows what coherence is. And whatever Diebenkorn's failures, he is in a class way beyond Rauschenberg, whose huge Guggenheim show I can't really imagine any reason to go and see, aside from there being something dumbfounding about the inflationary process at work here. Self-indulgence is what Rauschenberg has persuaded the world to accept in place of imagination, and the stupefying size of his success this fall leaves little doubt that there are very few people who can any longer tell the difference. Oh, there are critics who will remind you that Rauschenberg has his better and worse days, and that his most original period was sometime in the '50s, among the Combines, which include here *Bed*, with its quilt spattered with paint, and *Monogram* (1955-59), the stuffed goat with a tire around its middle. But people who have enthused over the Combines have accepted Rauschenberg's way of turning the don't-give-a-damn attitude into a professional code of ethics; and then there's nothing left but to accept the status quo.

ART SCENES *Galleries, Exhibits, and Events*

Salander-O'Reilly Galleries 20 East 79th Street, NYC, 10021, 212-879-6606. Monday through Saturday, 9:30-5:30. *Elie Nadelman's New Classicism*. An exhibition of sculpture following Nadelman's modern interpretation of classicism. Heads, busts and figures in marble, bronze and wood will be on view. A catalogue will be available through the gallery, with an essay by Gail Levin and John B. Van Sickle. November 11 - December 13. *Pierre Bonnard: Landscapes*. Fourteen paintings in oil on canvas of outdoor motifs, including landscapes, cityscapes and marines. An illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition. November 11 - December 13.

Antique Navajo and Mexican Textiles Andrew Nagen Gallery. P.O. Box 1306, Corrales, NM 87048, 505-898-5058. By appointment, please. Since 1976 we have specialized in the sale, purchase and appraisal of classic, transitional and regional textiles from all the Southwestern Native American and Hispanic cultures. We supply or request photos for purchase, sale or approval. No catalog.

Swann Galleries 104 East 25th Street, NYC, 212-254-4710. Monday through Friday, 10-6; previews Saturdays prior to auctions, 10-4. AUCTIONS: November 6: *Autographs*, including most areas of collecting: and photographs including inscribed frames of Sarah Bernhardt, Louis Pasteur, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Arturo Toscanini, and Benito Mussolini. November 13: *Works of Art on Paper*, including etchings by Rembrandt, and a large group of prints by Dürer and other early masters. Please write or call for preview hours, quarterly newsletter with full auction schedule, and to purchase catalogs. Now accepting consignments for winter auctions.

Aperture/Burden Gallery 20 East 23rd Street, NYC, 10010, 212-505-5555 x325. Tuesday through Saturday, 11-6. *Northwest Passage: The Photographs of Robert Glenn Ketchum*. This exhibit is a spectacular overview of the Arctic landscape created during a private boat crossing of the Northwest Passage from Alaska to Greenland. Ketchum and his Master Printer, Michael Wilder, are considered some of the finest printmakers in color photography, and this mid-career exhibit of nearly 60 prints is the culmination of their extraordinary 25-year working relationship. Also published as an Aperture book of the same title. November 18 - January 17.

Beacon Hill Fine Art 980 Madison Avenue, NYC, 10021, 212-734-3636, Tuesday through Saturday 10-6, Monday by appointment. *McEntee & Company*. Approximately fifty paintings and drawings by Jervis McEntee (1828-1891), the gifted painter of the Hudson River School. Including seldom-seen works from important museum and private collections. November 25 - January 17. Please call for information.

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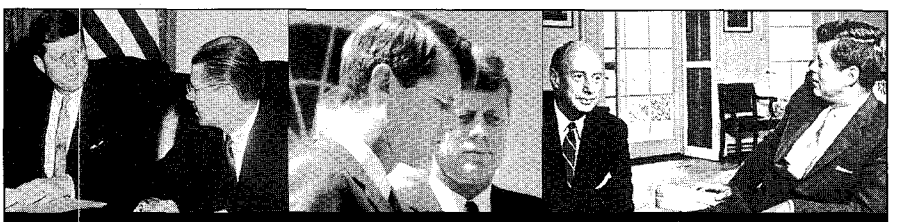
After a decade of budgetary woes, the Guggenheim is not an institution with a strong curatorial presence. The museum has simply finessed the whole problem of selection by allowing Walter Hopps of the Menil in Houston to spearhead a let-it-all-hang-out approach, which encourages a living artist who is having a retrospective to include anything and everything that will fit. The huge numbers of people who are coming to see this warehouse-style display may figure that since the museum has lost its mind, the simpatico thing to do is go right ahead and lose their minds, too. By the end of the show, a visitor has seen hundreds of surfaces decorated with found objects, with all kinds of photographic images, and sometimes with nothing at all. The overall helter-skelter look induces a listlessness that some museumgoers will decide is a wacko form of artsy illumination. The Rauschenberg show is a special favorite with European visitors, who may see this artist's rise as an archetypal American phenomenon.

Arcadian Retreats, Rauschenberg's latest series of photo-derived compositions, picks up on the touristic mood, with snaps that suggest some kind of idyllic Greek holiday. The pictures are called frescoes, which in this instance means that Rauschenberg has a machine that produces solvent vegetable dye prints of his photographs, which he can then press into wet plaster surfaces. Writing about these posh what-I-did-on-my-summer-vacation collages in a profile in *Vanity Fair*, John Richardson, who knows better, observed that this new method avoids "the technical difficulties that the traditional process entails." It's almost as if he were saying that Rauschenberg had outmaneuvered the Renaissance masters. At least Richardson has the good sense not to name names. That is more than you can say for Robert Hughes. In *American Visions*, Hughes remarks that "a strobe photo of moving naked bodies" that is included in Rauschenberg's 1964 piece on the aftermath of the Kennedy assassination, *Retroactive*, "irresistibly recalls Masaccio's figures in the Carmine of Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise—the loss of American happiness."

Robert Rauschenberg has been accepted as a sort of Renaissance Man of the School of New York for at least a quarter of a century now. He is not just a painter, a sculptor, and a printmaker; he has also been a choreographer, a performer, and a collaborator with scientists and engineers on works such as *Mud Muse* (1968-71), a large vat of bubbling goo. In 1972, the art historian Leo Steinberg got the Renaissance analogies going in his essay "Other Criteria," when he observed that in place of "the world of the Renaissance man who looked for his weather clues out of the window," Rauschenberg offered "the world of men who turn knobs to hear a taped message, 'precipitation probability ten percent tonight.'" In the Guggenheim catalog, Rosalind Krauss spruces up this view of the neo-Dadaist as newer Renaissance Man by discussing the Renaissance idea of the picture plane as a window and then quoting Rauschenberg to the effect that "a dirty or foggy window makes what is outside appear to be projected on to the window plane." Krauss says that Rauschenberg creates an "allegory of inside and outside, of front and back." To which Richardson, in *Vanity Fair*, can only add that Rauschenberg is "a painter of history," and that the huge television sets that are always on in every room of his Florida home are "like an additional window."

This is an American epic all right, with its dirty windows, weather reports, never-turned-off TVs, and assembly-line production. Rauschenberg keeps something happening by introducing a new model for practically every new year. The *Cardboards* (1971) are pieces of boxes, hung on the wall. The *Venetians* (1973) are assembled with distressed elements, such as a claw foot bathtub and two painted wood chairs. The *Hoarfrosts* (1974-76) are



THE KENNEDY TAPES

INSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE DURING THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Edited by Ernest R. May & Philip D. Zelikow

OCTOBER 1962: the United States and the Soviet Union stood face to face, each brandishing enough nuclear weapons to obliterate civilization in the Northern Hemisphere. For two weeks the inner circle of President Kennedy's National Security Council debated what to do, twice coming to the brink of attacking Soviet military units in Cuba. Through it all, unbeknownst to any of the participants except the President himself, audio tape was rolling, capturing for posterity the deliberations that might have ended the world as we know it. These are the full and authenticated transcripts of those riveting recordings.

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transfer prints on silk and chiffon. The *Jammers* (1975-76) combine wooden poles and big pieces of fabric. And then there are *Spreads, Scales, Photems, Kabal American Zephyrs, Japanese Recreational Clayworks, Gluts, Urban Bourbons, Borealises, Night Shades,* and *Arcadian Retreats.* Much of the work of recent years, which dominates the Guggenheim SoHo and Ace Gallery, is made on reflective surfaces, often Plexiglas or metal. The artist must be in a narcissistic mood, checking in each picture to catch the reflection of his famous face, which was dreamy yet hawklike in the '50s and now looks burnished and cheerful and fattened with success.

A decade ago, many art world people would have dismissed Rauschenberg as a has-been, but the happy-days-are-here-again mood of the '90s has brought new cachet to artists who will always be associated with the go-go years of the '60s. Rauschenberg is regarded as wonderfully impish for having turned the Guggenheim into the world's largest adult playpen, and the fact that his show is not exactly X-rated makes it seem all the more like old-fashioned flower-power fun. Looking at work of such truly numbing arbitrariness, some people may find themselves recalling one of the oldest criticisms ever lodged against modern art, namely that a child could do it. And having found their worst suspicions confirmed, they could be inclined to mistake the neatness of the equation for a kind of emotional fulfillment.

The up-for-anything public leaves the Guggenheim without suspecting that what it has experienced is a parody of an artistic achievement. The size of this hoax probably breaks all previous records, but then Rauschenberg has been selling a bill of goods for as long as he has been a star, which is close to forty years. He feeds on a natural desire to see art embrace life, and it seems to make not the slightest bit of difference that his raw materials are clichés, and that his handling of the medium—of *any* medium—is inert. True, there are some people who have remained immune to his appeal, but it is cold comfort to know that Rauschenberg changes nothing and that the action is really elsewhere, when several generations have come of age with Rauschenberg's work prominently displayed in the museums and reverently discussed in the universities.

We are at the beginning of another season, and it seems that the artists who would rather let painting die than hook a canvas up to an electrical outlet are even more desperately isolated. Yet what goes on at the margins has its own kind of power, and sometimes it is more than

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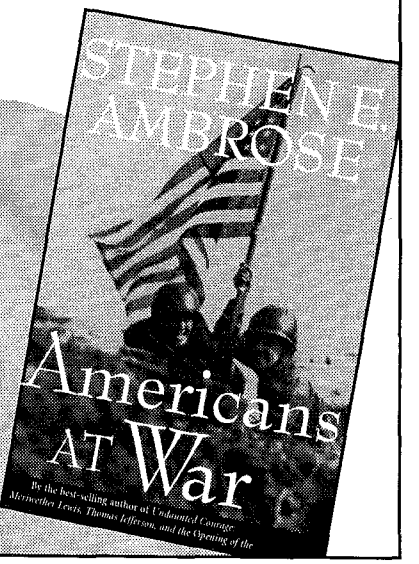

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enough to hold a gallerygoer's interest. I was excited to see a show by Betsy Kaufman, whose work I didn't know before, at Leslie Tonkonow, a new gallery in Chelsea. Kaufman does hard-edged paintings that have an amusingly sensuous impact. I like her sizzly, candy-bright color. And there is a bit of mischief in the way that she combines regular patterns to produce irregular effects, though I don't yet find enough wildness slipping through the imperturbability of her patterns and diagrams. The show included one real winner, though. *Insulate*, a horizontal composition, is dominated by a single color, a rosy terracotta hue that you might see on a stucco wall in a Southern climate, and on this surface Kaufman has arranged seventeen horizontal white lines, stretching nearly end to end. Below them, creating another horizontal band, is a series of brilliantly colored vertical units which function like the attention-grabbing border on a medieval illuminated manuscript. By juxtaposing the slow movement of the whites with the crammed, jostling verticality of all those tiny strips of colors, Kaufman creates an engaging conversation, a seductive duet.

Something in the dependable yet surprising rhythms of *Insulate* makes me think of the wall sculptures of Donald Judd, who gave Constructivist ideas in the '60s a new kind of pared-down impact. Although Judd came onto the scene five years or so after Rauschenberg, by the middle of the decade they were both revered as men who had busted beyond the bounds of oil-on-canvas; and when Kaufman gives her paintings some of Judd's sculptural impact, she seems to be demonstrating that painting can still absorb and transform outside influences. Kaufman hasn't yet accomplished all that much, but she has a spark of originality, and seeing her show at the end of a long September afternoon in the Chelsea galleries made my day. She brings new energy to old games. That sounds easy, but what we are seeing all around us suggests otherwise. In New York this fall, where Robert Rauschenberg is so ubiquitous that his work can begin to look as if it is related to everything, Betsy Kaufman is a piece of the puzzle that refuses to fall into place. •

What California taught America.

Money Changes Everything

By Richard White

It is hard to imagine attaching "dream" and "dreamin'" to any state in America except California. The Illinois Dream? The Mississippi Dream? The Delaware Dream? Say it and smirk. The citizens of those states must be content with the larger American Dream; and whatever particular dreams emanate locally are best kept to themselves. But the California Dream is an entire cultural tradition and it may be flaunted. (With *The Dream Endures*, Kevin Starr has launched the latest in the small fleet of books that he has organized under the flag of "Americans and the California Dream.") The California Dream is the most outlying, the most distant, the most exotic, the most fashionable piece of the American Dream. California doesn't live in the shadow of the American Dream. It magnifies and improves it.

And nothing really changes if the dream turns into a nightmare. California owns, and promotes, its own dystopia, too. The apocalypse might be Nathanael West's in *Miss Lonelyhearts*, or Philip K. Dick's (and Ridley Scott's) in *Blade Runner*, or Mike Davis's in *City of Quartz*. When the rest of the West has nightmares of overdevelopment, environmental degradation, invading glitz, or yawning class divisions—or all these things at once—they call their misfortune "Californication." In the national imagination, California seems to have the lock on the future.

Since California has epitomized an American future from virtually the moment it entered the Union, the California Dream is a future with a considerable history. It is this history of an imagined future that sustains not only Starr's work but also, in different ways, Malcolm Rohrbough's *Days of Gold*, a fine new book on the California Gold Rush, and a reissue of *Oil!*, Upton Sinclair's appealingly bad novel that was first published in 1927. Starr entitled one of the volumes in his series *Material Dreams*; it is an apt phrase for California dreaming because California dreams have been overwhelmingly material. In the early republic, dreams of new beginnings, rough equality, and real freedom also depended on *things*; but the things seemed merely the means to an end. A small freehold farm was necessary for Jeffersonian independence, but the farm's yield of independence and virtue was more important than the farm itself. How material things went from being the condition of the American dream to the substance of the American dream is an interesting story. It is also a Californian story, whose outlines these books sketch.

California showed the way. In California, things became not just the props for an American way of life, but the whole point of that way of life. To possess the props—to possess them without guilt or obligation—was to attain the ideal. American California came into being as the most likely site for a quick rush of wealth and the freedom to enjoy it. Ever since the Forty-niners, California has relentlessly added to the catalog of things to be desired while promising a perfect place—never too cold and rarely too wet or hot—to enjoy them. Still, this fixation on things must not be reduced to greed. There was greed, and lots of it; but the dreams are more interesting and more various than that. They are surprisingly potent alloys of pedestrian desire and a sort of benign envy. The California dreamers almost never aspired to new worlds.

Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation
by Malcolm J. Rohrbough
(University of California Press, 368 pp., $29.95)

Oil!
by Upton Sinclair
(University of California Press, 527 pp., $14.95)

The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940s
by Kevin Starr
(Oxford University Press, 480 pp., $35)

Richard White is a professor at the University of Washington. His latest book is *The Organic Machine* (Hill and Wang).

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They wanted only what the most fortunate among them already had.

The rich in America can never be really hated, because they are so ordinary. It is only their stuff that is extraordinary. This is why the figures who inhabit Kevin Starr's books—the suddenly rich, the momentarily prominent—are by and large so forgettable and so forgotten. They don't matter much because they are interchangeable. They are themselves only the necessary accessories for their clothes, their cars, their houses, their art, their food. (When they couple, it is a mutual acquisition.) Hearst's Castle matters infinitely more than Hearst. Anybody can be William Randolph Hearst or Marion Davies, if he or she lives in Hearst's Castle. Without Hearst's Castle, most Americans would probably remember neither of them.

The history of the California Dream as an American dream begins, almost too perfectly, with gold. According to Malcolm Rohrbough, gold, and gold alone, triggered the "greatest mass migration in the history of the Republic." That may be a bit of an exaggeration, given later twentieth-century movements of population into, among other places, California; but the movement was large and startling. If it was not the largest American migration, it was certainly the most single-minded. From all over the United States, and from Europe, China, Australia, Mexico, Central America, and South America, men came to California (the migration was overwhelmingly male) because they desired gold. They enslaved, they slaughtered, and they dispossessed the Indian population that remained after its earlier decimations by Spaniards and Mexicans. The new arrivals swamped the *californios* who had assaulted the Indians.

The miners were animated by a lust for money, but it was a complicated lust. In Rohrbough's skilled hands, their desire can sometimes inspire sympathy. Rohrbough treats Gold Rush California as the multiethnic and multiracial society that it was, but the most interesting idea in his book may be found in its subtitle, "The California Gold Rush and the American Nation." He shrewdly focuses on the relationships, attenuated but not broken, between American miners and the families and the communities that sent them out and expected them to return.

Gold exposed the character of every society that it touched. In the United States, gold bared the deep tensions within a society only recently capitalist. The departure of the Forty-niners and those who followed "called into question . . . basic values—marriage, family, work, wealth, and leisure." In family after family, in community after community, the ramifications of the single-minded pursuit of wealth in a democratic and capitalist society was no longer an abstract issue with distant consequences. The consequences were immediate and tangible. In 1849, for example, the Reverend James Davis warned that it was the duty of wives, mothers, and sisters to turn men away from the pursuit of Mammon, for their search for wealth would prove the miners' ruin. "The New England Primer," he preached, would "weigh more in the balances of the Almighty than all the gold-diggers on the banks of the Sacramento."

Of course, nothing could seem more American than the California Gold Rush. It was, as Rohrbough writes, "the ultimate example of economic democracy: anyone with a pick, pan, and shovel could participate, at least in the early years, regardless of wealth, social standing, education or family name." The Argonauts, as they styled themselves, shared two powerful beliefs. The first was an "abiding optimism" that their trip would make them "a substantial sum and possibly a fortune and that these riches would profoundly alter their lives." The second was their belief that hard work and perseverance would

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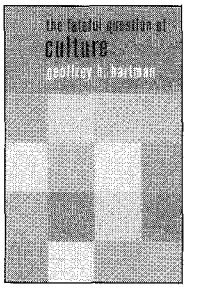

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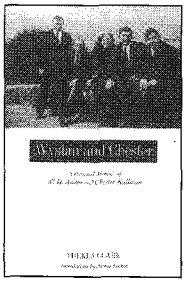

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be rewarded. Wealth was equally available to all who would take the risk of getting to California and all who were willing to work. Those without the cash could get others to finance them for a share of the proceeds.

But this sunny utopian capitalism, in which rewards flowed to anyone ready for toil, masked other motivations that sprang from the more mundane capitalism that was transforming antebellum America. In this American economy, hard work did not necessarily yield great rewards; and work itself was becoming more regimented, more time-consuming, more demeaning. The United States was a nation of commercial farmers, in which free farm families worked long hours for a few hundred dollars a year and slave families worked for virtually nothing. It was a society still enamored of republican independence, in which a term such as "wage slavery" made visceral sense to growing numbers of working people who moved to towns and cities where they increasingly lost control of their work. That these same people—at least the white ones—considered themselves better off than people anywhere else in the world was not the point. The point was that they did not consider themselves as well off as they should be in a "free" country. *That* was what made gold so appealing.

God was providential. It was the wild card that would strengthen all who held weak hands. It would put people where they deserved to be. Contemporaries spoke of "gold fever," but, by later standards, the appetites were modest. For the afflicted, certainly, the economic calculations were cool and rational. When an annual cash income of $350 in 1847 made Eddin Lewis one of the most prosperous farmers in Sangamon County, Illinois, and when a young man such as C.C. Mobley could record in his diary that his company of miners had made $350 apiece in two weeks during 1850, who wouldn't be tempted by gold? Its appeal was manifest. It might not erode the starker differences in wealth and power that a capitalist economy was creating, but it seemed to provide a shortcut to a higher stratum of society. A person need not return with great wealth, only with enough wealth to develop the farm, to capitalize the business, to erase the debts, to buy land, to establish a life independent of parents, to get married, to have a decent start. Most Forty-niners dreamed of a fortune, but they would have settled for being Eddin Lewis.

The San Francisco *Alta California* got the hopes exactly right in 1848. A mere four months, it wrote, had effected a "revolution" in California. Before, "capital was in the hands of a few individuals engaged in trade and speculation; now labor has got the upper hand of capital, and the laboring men hold the great mass of wealth in the country—the gold." This was a situation that would not last. In fact, as Rohrbough argues, it never fully existed at all. Men with wealth could still command labor. They recruited Indians, they sent for Hawaiians, they employed poor *californios*. Still, if this was not a world turned upside down, it was a different world that suddenly seemed far more equal. The early technology of shovels and cradles was simple and available to all. The basic implement of work was the human body. And everyone looked equal, dressing in the same miner's uniform of boots, sturdy trousers, checked shirt, slouch hat, and gloves, and working together. Even when they struck it rich, they still seemed equal, for at first there was little to buy.

California, particularly in the early years, did deliver wealth. Men worked hard and made money. But soon after the first great American migration of 1849, the situation changed. Work in California became more like work in the states. And even in the beginning, hard work was not the whole story. "There is a great deal of luck in washing Gold," William Brown wrote to his parents. Some people worked hard and found gold; others worked hard and found nothing. And as more miners came, the chances of getting lucky decreased. To increase the odds for those who remained, American miners began to drive others from the fields. Non-whites went first. Americans banished Indians and Mexicans from many fields. The Chinese worked under a heavy tax, and under discriminatory laws that confined them largely to the leavings of whites. Foreign whites, particularly the French, suffered lesser handicaps, and the *californios*, from whom the Americans had only just taken the country, found themselves classed as foreigners. The meaning of economic democracy was freedom of competition for American white men and the foreigners whom they admitted to their number.

Even this did not restore equality for those who remained. Those with capital bought up claims for speculation, and men had to pay to work them. Soon gold became harder to find, and the technology necessary to get it grew more sophisticated and expensive. Miners needed elaborate water systems for hydraulic mining, and they had to go underground to pursue gold once the easy surface placers were gone. It was wiser to get a stake and get out of active mining, investing one's capital in claims or a business. Corporations were necessary to work underground mines and to build water supply systems. Soon there were capitalists and workers.

This much is relatively familiar. What is less familiar is what this meant to the miners and those they left behind. The Gold Rush might look like an apotheosis of American individualism, but on closer examination it was the family that was the basic unit of decision-making. The decision to go in search of gold followed family discussions that were "gendered and generational." Wives of prospective Argonauts often opposed the journey, framing the decision as a choice between money and family. Mothers were almost universally hostile to their sons' departures, fearing that they would never see them again; and brothers and sisters, anticipating the added burdens that would fall on them, also sometimes opposed the adventure. After all, someone had to pick up the departed miner's responsibilities. The pursuit of wealth obviously won out in tens of thousands of such disputes, but even when it won it had to master, or to compromise with, other values. Those who left did not run away; they usually won a grudging consent by promising to send money home, to make a timely return, to live a respectable Christian life. And the vast majority did expect a speedy return.

California thus emerged as a scene of temptation as well as opportunity. The miners made promises that they meant to keep. The journey to California became "a test of their character and of their capacity to maintain their standards of conduct" in a distant world of strangers. But the temptations were great, because this was a journey into anonymity, into a place where people could reinvent themselves. As Rohrbough astutely recognizes, California was different from the rest of the United States in its diversity, its opportunities, its standards of professional and personal conduct, its range of attractions. Here was the chance to pursue self-interest without the restraints that a local world of family and community imposed.

In the 1850s, the pure pursuit of self-interest was less a dream than a nightmare. As people back home feared, things could go terribly wrong, for in California the competition for gold ruled all. Loyalty to comrades was commendable, but not at the price of financial loss. At the heart of Rohrbough's wonderful book is this tension between a way of life that seems a modern liber-

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tarian's fantasy—a boys' club concerned with the pursuit of wealth, with few limits on personal behavior and a collective concern only with the security of life and property—and the commitments that the miners had made to a family and a community that they left behind.

In California, miners did not live as they should, and they knew it. For all its appeals, California always seemed incomplete to the early miners. White women symbolized the lack. The miners could obtain sexual gratification at a price, but they regarded fornication as an occasional luxury; they missed women more often for their daily labor. Prentice Mulford, whose account of how the Gold Rush affected Sag Harbor, New York provides Rohrbough with one of his best sources, remarked on what innocents the Argonauts were: "Not one of them then could bake his own bread, turn a flap jack, re-seat his trousers, or wash his shirt." The Gold Rush meant that men had to do "women's work." Most of all, the miners missed white women as a mark of the civilized and genteel society that was necessary to give meaning to their work and their search for wealth, even as it threw their present activities into moral doubt. Although miners missed white women, this rarely involved any intention to import their own wives, sisters, and mothers to California. The respectable women who did come usually came out of duty, but they, too, found considerable economic opportunity.

Rohrbough discovers a nostalgia in the miners' letters, a lack of enthusiasm for the world that they inhabited. The California Dream in this earliest incarnation was of a wealth to be spent elsewhere. California, as John Baker wrote home to New Hampshire, was "the place to accumulate a fortune and N. England the place to enjoy one." The more they recognized California's difference, the more they longed for the people and the places that they had left behind, and the more they feared, as their absences grew longer, that there would be no place for them in that world. Meanwhile, at home, the miners' search for wealth often meant that scarce financial resources had to be stretched even thinner, and absent miners' wives and families had to take on unaccustomed duties.

Most miners never succeeded. The idea that hard work and right values ensured success became a casualty of the Gold Rush. Miners who left home promising to avoid vices such as gambling came to decide that mining itself was a lottery, as dependent on chance as the drawing of a card or the toss of the dice. Two men could dig side by side, and one could be rewarded with an abundance of gold while the other found nothing. Fortune was *too* democratic. The gold that returned home, Prentice Mulford wrote of Sag Harbor, "was not always dug by the moral Argonauts, from whom the most was expected.... It was often the gathering of some of the obscurer members of our community."

The problem was escaping the dream. There was freedom in success, when the Argonaut could return home, the dream fulfilled. And there was freedom in admitting failure, because then, too, one could return home, and try to resume the old life. The problem was in persistence, in dreaming on. This afflicted those Argonauts who, failing, continued to search for gold. When Ephriam Delano's wife Jane asked when he was coming home, he wrote: "That I cannot say for when a person gits [sic] to California it is hard to say or tell when he gets away." When looking at Delano and thousands like him, it might seem that the accusations against the miners were true. They had become slaves of gold. They had betrayed their families; they worked only for themselves. They were irresponsible and, despite their hard work, they were hedonistic, rejecting the values of mid-nineteenth-century Protes-

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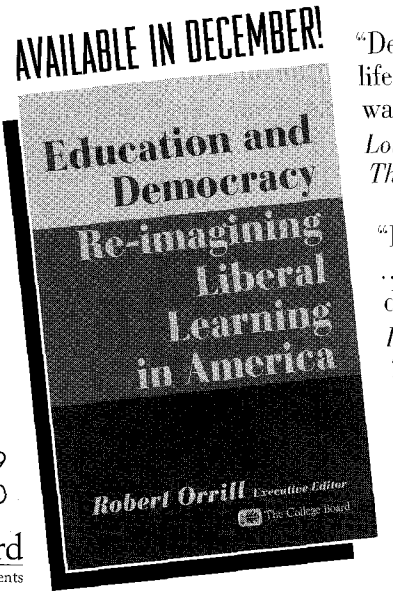

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tantism. Rohrbough ascribes (not altogether convincingly) much of the violence and the xenophobia of the Gold Rush to this threatening of their identity as things went sour for so many men.

For the families of these men, waiting became "a permanent condition." For the miners, waiting for letters, their correspondence with home became their sole participation in family life. A trip often embarked on in the name of family became an alienation from family. Rohrbough writes affectingly of the long twilight that the Gold Rush brought to many families whose sons and husbands could not awake from the dream. Allen Varner could not in the end fulfill his promise to return after three years in California. The problem was not the pull of California, it was what awaited him in Indiana: to be a "Laborer for the stupid ignorant tow-headed Hoosier Because He happened through the luck of Father to be lord of the soil."

Of course, there were some who did come to appreciate California, to recognize its appeals beyond gold. They established farms and businesses, and eventually California became "part of the fabric of the nation." Still, even with reduced expectations, even with the illusion of easy wealth gone, even when correspondents warned others against imitating them, a glimmer of California's old appeal remained. Asa Smith wrote home to "tell Sydney he needn't want to come to this country—hard labor—harder living—and still harder company—to pay a man for his rashness." But Asa added, "we can make a little more here than there."

Later the Forty-niners made the Gold Rush over in their memories. It was not the enterprise in self-aggrandizement that emerged in their letters and their diaries, it was a patriotic adventure in expanding the Republic and rescuing the West from savagery and Catholicism. Personal failures could be erased in national accomplishments, often dubious in their own right and anyway not the intended results of the Gold Rush. Having in their youth lived for the future, the Forty-niners as old men pined for the past. As the song that gives Rohrbough his title went,

> And I often grieve and pine,
> For the days of gold,
> The days of old,
> The days of forty-nine.

In Upton Sinclair's novel, *Oil!*, another natural gift of wealth drives the California action. Like gold, oil—black gold—was in the ground, and there for the finding; like gold, it demanded hard work and luck; like gold, its production ultimately sorted human producers into those doing the dangerous labor and those garnering the fabulous wealth.

Oil, and the desire for wealth that it feeds, does not pose quite the same danger of corruption in Sinclair's novel as gold does in Rohrbough's history, because early twentieth-century capitalist America seemed to Sinclair already hopelessly corrupt. And it was California that epitomized its corruption. In Sinclair's novel, families exist largely as breeding grounds for pathologies. Infidelity is the norm; and selfishness and self-indulgence are the basic family values. Religion is the domain of fanatics, charlatans, hopelessly naïve hicks, and laughable spiritualists. It is pathetically easy for the big capitalists of Sinclair's Angel City to make religion their tool. The reader can sympathize with Sinclair's mercenary businessmen only when they have to deal with Sinclair's mercenary politicians. At least the businessmen have large ambitions.

Sinclair drives these lessons home by making the book's plot a fictional gloss on real events: the election of 1920, the discovery of oil at Signal Hill in Long Beach, California, the Teapot Dome and Elk Hills scandals, the Russian Revolution, the strikes of Los Angeles petroleum workers. *Oil!* is ostensibly about class conflict, but in Sinclair's version of

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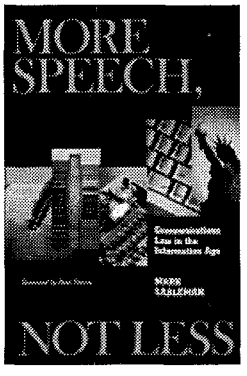

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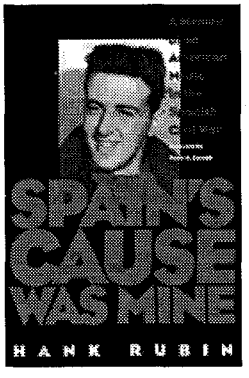

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early twentieth-century California, class hardly exists. The novel opens with ordinary people in Angel City who own lots atop an oil field quarreling about the division of wealth that they have not yet obtained and have in no way earned. The "fires of greed" had already "melted every principle and every law."

Workers and the middle class differ from the rich only in income. They all share the same basic values, ambitions, and tastes. The movie actors, actresses, and directors who populate the middle section of the novel grow rich by pandering to the degraded popular tastes that they themselves share. In *Oil!*, all the major characters with wealth were once poor. They work hard, but for money they are also willing to mutilate themselves figuratively and literally—in one case shooting off a toe for insurance money to continue production—and to sacrifice others for money, too. The people whom they exploit, and in most cases despise, are the people they came from. The "shiftlessness of the working class whom he had to employ" was the favorite theme of J. Arnold Ross, the old muleskinner who is the father of the book's hero, Bunny Ross. Greed is the great leveler, uniting rich and poor. Changing one's social status was simply a matter of acquiring the right stuff in copious amounts. "Efficiency was the watch-word out here in the West, and when you decided to change your social status, you put the job right through."

In the version of the California Dream that dominates *Oil!*, the search for wealth has bifurcated results, depending on whether Sinclair is emphasizing production or consumption. Capitalist production of wealth mars people, but consumption fatally corrupts them. Those who make money live in the future. "A man never had enough money, no matter how much he had; he was always reaching out, doing business with the future, so to speak." For those who consume wealth, however, there is only the present of acquiring and enjoying things. Early twentieth-century California is not Gold Rush California. It had become the preferred site of consumption as well as production.

California leisure kept a person in perpetual motion. The rich treated leisure with such great seriousness, and it came to demand so much of a person's attention, that it might as well be work. Beneath the prudish disapproval that colored Upton Sinclair's assessment of California's wealthy sybarites was an amused astonishment at how hard they worked at having fun, at how deadly serious they were about pleasure. "They talked about their play, just as solemnly as if it had been work: tennis tournaments, golf tournaments, polo matches—all sorts of complicated ways of hitting a little ball about a field!" The obsessive activity, the elaborate outfits of sports clothes—all seemed a kind of self-hypnosis "to make themselves believe that they were really enjoying their lives." The men, and the few women, who make the money in *Oil!* are ruthless, crude, exploitative, corrupt, deceitful, and selfish, but they are strong, and they have a rugged dignity that comes from shaping and controlling the world. Their wives, their mistresses, their husbands, and their children, who only share their wealth, are weak and ridiculous. The first generation of California rich might be "crude and healthy," but their grandchildren would give even those rich Europeans made "rotten to the core" by "generations of hereditary privilege . . . lessons in depravity."

The novel proceeds as an innocent's education in the realities of California's social and economic system. The innocent is young Bunny Ross, a rich boy of sweet decency, immune to the corruption of wealth. Bunny's chance meeting with the poor Paul Watkins changes the rich boy's life. Paul still possesses older American values; he believes that you have no right to money unless you have earned it. Sinclair was writing in the

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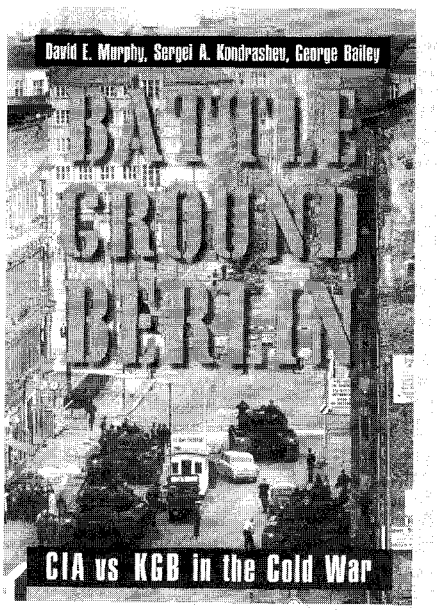

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Because the four Gospels are contradictory and use classical rhetorical techniques to apologize (methodology that encouraged lying and mythicizing) for Jesus, their presentation of him cannot be trusted. The true personality hidden by layers of authorial and editorial inventiveness is undiscernible. The problem resides in four canonical Gospels which have interdependency and contrivance of anecdotes. As a sole source they only result in fantastical rediscoveries of the historical Jesus.

A source, a document, independent of the canonical Gospels, is needed. Jack Hannah argues that we have it in a collection of 113 sayings of Jesus unearthed in the Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945. Hannah demonstrates that sayings numbered 2 through 71 and 114 correspond *topically and sequentially* with events depicted in the canonical *Gospel of Mark* from 1:1 through 14:9, and the correspondence significantly increases by inserting into the Markan narrative the even more recently discovered *Secret Gospel of Mark*. Furthermore, sayings numbered 72 through 113 make sense as chronologically ordered pieces of oral teaching appropriate to Jesus' bringing to a close his work with disciples, as one might expect occurred during the two days he spent with them at Bethany (between Mk 13:1,2 and 14:3-9).

This collection of sayings had appended to it the title *Gospel of Thomas*. Its relationship to Markan chronology leads Hannah to hypothesize that it is exactly what its incipit claims: notes of enigmatic sayings jotted down by Thomas while following Jesus as a disciple. This accounts for the sayings being in chronological order. Without disturbing the chronological order of either the Markan or Thomasean materials, Hannah intercalates them, thereby giving the sayings context that renders them more intelligible. Sayings that many scholars thought were borrowed from the canonical Gospels prove to be independent and more primitive in form (hence more likely authentic). This correspondence from an independent source also gives confidence that a firsthand reminiscence underlies the *Gospel of Mark*, though fleshed out with numerous fabrications.

The 113 sayings never allude to messiahship, or to God (except once metaphorically), or to demons or a devil. According to them Jesus rejects circumcision, almsgiving, fasting, and the efficacy of prayer. He states that what the disciples regard as spirit is really something produced from bodily flesh. He teaches prudence, self-sufficiency, and continual investigation of life as the basis for virtues. Thus, his principles are nearer to Epicureanism than to Judaism, Cynicism, or Stoicism. Yet, Epicureanism was the philosophy most disdained by Jewish and, later, Christian teachers because of its rejection of Providence and human immortality. Jesus seems to differ from Epicureanism in but one way: he borrowed its theory of how a human being mentally constructs a truly living god (as described for example in Philodemus' *On Piety*) to devise his *sui generis* theory that a person constructs a heavenly twin which continues the person's consciousness as an immortal, sexless being. So, while Epicureans tried to give comfort by saying "Death is nothing to us," Jesus favored the expression "You will not taste death."

YOU WILL NOT TASTE DEATH: JESUS AND EPICUREANISM
by Jack Hannah
Order by mail: 321 pp.pbk. $12 postpaid.
FRANK PUBLISHING 1816 Springmill Road, Mansfield, OH 44903-8907

early twentieth century when, unlike now, those values were a weapon to be wielded against the rich and not against the poor. The encounter and the ensuing friendship will transform Bunny. *Oil!* is a Horatio Alger story in reverse. It is the story of the redemption *from* wealth and its values.

In a novel in which "the system" swallows and deforms virtually everyone else, it is never explained how Paul manages to spring decent, brave, and self-sacrificing from a crazed Pentecostal family. He and his sister Ruth, who has an incestuous devotion to him, are just plain good. At first glance, they seem like socialist saints, and revolutionary Russia seems the promised land. (Paul dies a communist martyr.) But the novel is more tangled than this. Russia is never-never-land, but *Oil!* is rooted in California. Sinclair's descriptions are often cartoonish, but when writing about the work of bringing in an oil well, or about California's towns and cities, there is a striking vibrancy to his prose. The paradisaical future is California, not Russia, and the desired values lie in America's past as much as in an imagined utopia. What Paul possesses, and what Bunny aspires to, and what virtually all the other characters lack, is independence, particularly a moral independence that is close to the older Jeffersonian variety. Trapped in the web of capital represented by banks and the largest oil companies, even J. Arnold Ross can't make his own decisions. "Why, Dad," Bunny tells him, "we don't own our own business! We don't even own our souls!"

Beneath the California dream that Sinclair abhors, there is a second dream that California nurtures; a salvific dream. Bunny and his father are always happiest when in the hills of Paradise Valley hunting quail, and Bunny's own dream for the tract that increases his father's wealth is for a life of simplicity on the land. For the nature that corrupts the Californian may also bless him. But this older simplicity, this reign of small producers, is finally impossible for Sinclair, in actual California and in the novel. The truth is, as J. Arnold Ross admits, "there's jist [sic] no place in the business world for the little feller any more." Even when, in one of the novel's few bright moments, relief comes to the workers, it comes from above, from the state, from "a lean old Yankee divinity, with a white goatee and a suit made of red and white stripes with blue stars spangled over it; Uncle Sam himself stretched out his mighty hand, and declared that oil workers were human beings as well as citizens, and would be protected in their rights as both."

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Sinclair captures, and is captured by, the odd American reverence for the little guy, whom no one in the country aspires to be, and whom most people think is powerless. Sinclair ends up tossed between his hopes for a world of equality, in which ordinary people have a chance, and his cynicism about ordinary people. Outside of Bunny, Paul, Ruth, Bunny's eventual wife Rachel, and a few others, the socialists and the workers are as sorry a lot as the capitalists. They still desire to "look like the bourgeoisie," spending money "for tobacco, and booze, and imitation finery." They need to be instructed in proper values, which leads Bunny and Rachel back to their labor college in the country—"the woods and the hills, and other things you really cared about." But how the quarreling sectarians, the little guys who aspire to be big guys, are going to be transformed is not any clearer than why the land of the horrific Pentecostal goat farm that produced the family that Paul Watkins fled should somehow now make things right for Bunny and Rachel.

Poor Sinclair. Disgusted by the California that he saw around him, longing for an older American Dream, for the fantasy of Jeffersonian virtue and independence that history had eliminated, he is left only with the chimera of the Soviet Union and the hope that Uncle Sam will restore a world of equality and responsibility. He no longer trusts the dreams of ordinary people. They, too, must be re-educated.

The democratization of the world of the California rich that appalled Sinclair is at the center of Kevin Starr's new book. He opens with California in the 1930s, a "pleasure-seeking, leisure-oriented society that contained within itself the formula for post-war America." That's right: the pleasure-seeking 1930s. It is true that Starr did look at the rather considerable downside of the Depression in an earlier volume, but it is still startling to discover that the California of the Depression years that matters most to Starr is the California of Palm Springs, Carmel, San Diego, and Pasadena.

Starr's Dream books have become somewhat formulaic. He sees them as being "concerned primarily with the intersection of social and imaginative experience, public and private." He began in 1973 with *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915*, and in many ways this remains the best volume of the series. His aim was to delineate the "imaginative aspects" of California's struggle to achieve a collective identity. Since then he has launched book after

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Shore Derelict

They call him Watras (Capybara his textbook
name)—perhaps a shortened form
of water rat, since he's
always prowling
along the river banks or creek margins. Watras,
the bulkiest
rodent in the world and, for his size,
much the slowest.
A clumsy gait, he has. Mostly
a grass eater

himself, not much chance to be a carnivore
if all smaller game can outrun
and outwit you. Even so,
his ratlike snout
and furtive shambling trot roused fear or malice
in the hearts
of transient fisherfolk who settled
in riverside camps.
Thus, for a few generations
five-shilling

bounty was levied on their heads, and scads
of hunters massacred Watras
for coins. So plentiful
were the rodents,
you could amass a reeking stockpile of carcass
in one morning's
quick sweep of the littoral environs,
and carry back home
your day's fair wage... But today,
this long-haired

wide-nosed rat, slinky Watras, has caught on
as great succulent food-fad
with the local riverside
homesteaders, who
scorch & roast them like wild boars on twisting
spits upraised
over open-hearth smoky pine fires,
their flesh flaking
sweetly like salmon... *Endangered*
species—Watras.

LAURENCE LIEBERMAN

book to follow this collective identity toward the present. The books always have inspired moments, but they have come to be increasingly predictable: a combination of capsule histories of California places and a collection of sketches of those members of California's rich and upper middle class with cultural pretensions, and the professionals who catered to them. These are the people who had lifestyles before "lifestyle" was a word. Starr's account of them can degenerate into a cross between a literate Louella Parsons and an annotated library catalog. So-and-so flirted with so-and-so; so-and-so bought a "commodious Spanish revival home"; so-and-so also wrote this and that.

At his best, Starr is an interesting writer who, despite his infatuation with the rich and famous, can be a perceptive historian of the Californian middle class. When the focus is on the middle class, the rich and their hangers-on become simple prototypes for ways of living that middle class consumers acquire in off-the-rack versions. Palm Springs is an early and eloquent example. "Leisure, the outdoors, a distinctive architecture, the good life: it was the California formula, and Palm Springs had it all." As Starr portrays it, Palm Springs recapitulated the "entire development of California as pleasure principle." Writers and poets discovered the desert and found it sublime; promoters created Palm Springs as a health resort and found it profitable. In the 1930s, Hollywood discovered the resort as a place to play. Palm Springs emerged as a resort for the affluent, but it also offered "ordinary Americans, so many of them still beset by Depression difficulties, opportunities for gawking and vicarious satisfaction." They drove in on Sundays, gawked, loitered, and drove home.

Starr is a master at what might be called spatial emplotment. He recognizes that the California Dream needs to be firmly located in a California place, whether Palm Springs, a Burlingame estate, or a Southern California beach town, which are themselves cultural creations. The dream needs sunshine and flowers and palm trees, or alternatively fog and redwoods. It needs the physical beauty of California, a beauty that needs to be made to feel Californian. The best chapter in the book is on "Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, and the Landscape of California." Here Starr's encyclopedic scope narrows to a more focused view. This discussion is less rushed, more fine-grained; and it becomes apparent how, in Adams's words, the best photographers captured the California landscape "not the way the subject appeared in reality, but how it felt to me."

In a work largely focused on consumption, Starr is most interesting when he focuses on production. His concern is with an Arcadian California that "existed, first and foremost, in the imagination," but he recognizes that imagination was not just the feelings of individual producers such as Adams. Imagining had become an industrialized process. California dreams are mass-produced dreams. Hollywood has gone to an "industrialized studio system." It has become "permanently structured as the entertainment wing of an urban-industrial economy dominated by a handful of banks and investors who had every reason to wish the economy to recover and, most important, wanted the American people to remain orderly and well-behaved during the recovery process."

Starr has a far more benign view of the leisurely consumption at the heart of the California Dream than Sinclair; but like Sinclair, he finds in nature a higher and purer version of California Dreaming. The poet Robinson Jeffers embodies what Starr calls the "California formula": "to seek and find a healing connection with the universe." The "desire to forge a healing connection with nature through understanding and acceptance" may have been "among the prime imperatives of intellectual and imaginative life in California," as Starr contends. But Jeffers, the famously misanthropic poet of Carmel who often seemed more interested in punishing people than in healing them, is a distinctly peculiar example of an optimistic and evangelical naturalism. In "Rock and Hawk," for example, Jeffers sought to make the hawk socially emblematic: ".... bright power, dark peace; / Fierce consciousness joined with final; / Disinterestedness." Starr quotes the poem; but he does not observe that it was a particularly inopportune emblem on the eve of World War II.

Starr goes over the top in seeing Ishi—the tragic and complicated Yahi Indian who was literally the last of his people and lived out his last days in Berkeley, where he died in 1916—as the embodiment of a California ideal of the seamless integration of nature, culture, and identity. Falling headlong into the dream himself, Starr proclaims this integration as "the most powerful subliminal ideal in California as a regional civilization." His people slaughtered by Rohrbough's original California Dreamers among others, Ishi survives to become an incarnation of a new California Dream. It is the New Age! And it

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was gestating there all along, among the blood and the slaughter.

Starr's dichotomy is simplistic and false. Nature and consumption are not incompatible alternatives. Quite the contrary. The consumption of nature, as the environmental historian Samuel Hays has argued, is at the heart of modern environmentalism. Following World War II, an interest in the quality of life replaced concern with the efficiency of industrial production. Conservation yielded to environmentalism, and environmental integrity became an attribute of a new and higher standard of living. The dream can have nature and consume it too, as even the copywriters for Jeep commercials or the editors of *Outside* magazine realize.

Yet there is shrewdness in the conclusion of Starr's book. He closes with the European émigrés, the great writers and composers, who found refuge from Hitler in Southern California. Whatever its shortcomings, as Starr writes, Southern California "kept in check the nightmare that was Europe." And when the war was over, most émigrés remained "together with their children and their children's children, still sojourning beneath the palm trees of this sunny southern latitude." California dreams can conquer even those who think themselves most immune. •

Holy Minimalism!

BY PETER PHILLIPS

Arvo Pärt
by Paul Hillier

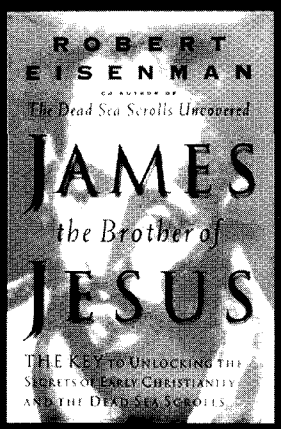
(Oxford University Press, 219 pp., $58 cloth, $19.95 paper)

How is it three of the most successful composers writing today—Arvo Pärt, Henryk Gorecki, and John Tavener—all have strong affiliations with either the Russian Orthodox or the Eastern Roman Catholic Church? What is it about contemporary composition that is rooted in the traditions of the Eastern European churches that so fascinates people? It is true that the artistic and spiritual histories of these composers are not identical: Gorecki and Pärt were born in Communist countries, where they adopted the most prevalent local religion (Polish Catholicism and Estonian Orthodoxy, respectively), and Tavener is a British convert to the Russian Orthodox church. Still, something in the tradition or the atmosphere of these faiths has caused them to hit upon a similar musical style, which has appealed to people all over the world. And it seems that they hit upon it initially in isolation, without any knowledge of the others' work.

The most commercially successful composition of the new spiritualism is certainly Gorecki's *Third Symphony*. In its recording by Dawn Upshaw and the London Sinfonietta, it raced to the top of every classical chart. More a song cycle than a symphony, this work has three movements, all of them marked "Lento." Much of the force of the writing is contained in the first of them, which is as long as the others put together and includes a setting of the fifteenth-century Polish prayer known as the Holy Cross Lament. The other two movements also include writing for solo soprano: the second is a setting of a prayer found on the wall of a cell at Gestapo headquarters at Zakopane; the third a setting of a folksong. The Holy Cross Lament of the opening movement forms a centerpiece to what is otherwise a symmetrically conceived instrumental work based on canonic writing; the music after the Lament is a mirror image of the music before it.

In choosing slow tempo markings and sacred texts, and in turning to the old technique of canon, Gorecki predicted much of the style that was later to characterize the music of Pärt and Tavener. Indeed, this symphony was written in 1976, and achieved fame fifteen or so years later, at a time when Pärt and Tavener were well established. Still, Gorecki's career has taken a different direction from that of the others. He seems to be disinclined to learn a Western language or to give interviews, so that for most of his audience he has effectively written only one piece. Gorecki prefers a life out of the public eye, while Pärt and Tavener cultivate the image of the mystical recluse while living in the glare of publicity. More important, Gorecki is a Catholic, who would not have had in his ears the

"What A Book!...Magnificent"
-Neil Asher Silberman



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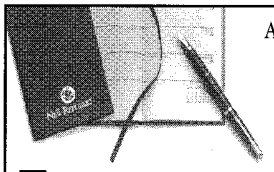

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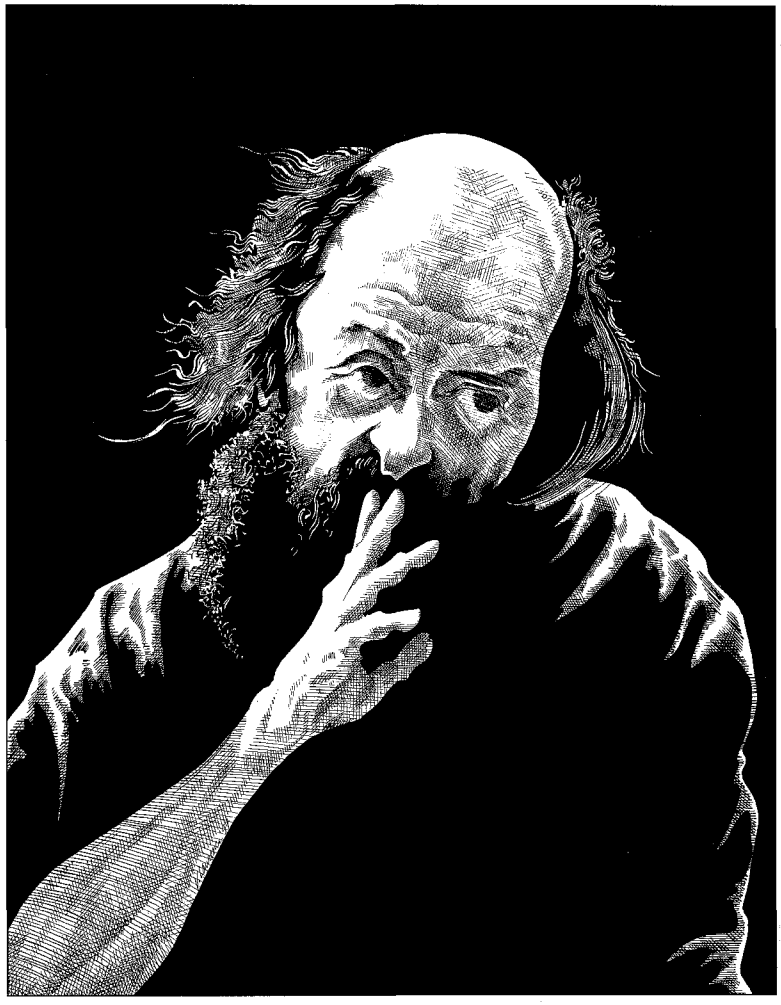
particular sounds of Orthodox services, in which the music never seems to stop but continues unchanging, sometimes for hours, one piece melding into the next. Something of this, so obvious in Tavener and Pärt, is missing in Gorecki's more formal constructions.

The image of the mystical recluse, the almost monk-like figure, is a part of the appeal of the "holy minimalists"; and it has been fortified by the gnomic observations with which Pärt and Tavener reward interviewers. Their compositional style draws very deliberately on traditional musics, whether it be chant or early part-writing, or just in the matter of instrumentation, audibly heightening the listener's impression that the sounds before him are a continuation of the practice of many centuries. There is a security in this feeling, almost a comfort, which the musical language itself does nothing to jolt. For all their radical spirituality, these are not disturbing composers. They make constant use of dissonance, but it is a dissonance that threatens nothing, in which there are few sharp edges: a "soft" dissonance. And this cozy idiom has a logic and a backbone that can survive almost endless repetition (especially in Tavener's bigger pieces) and transferral from one scoring to another. (Pärt's *Summa* has appeared in at least five different musical arrangements.) Indeed, it is the sensation of endless repetition that accounts for the beauty and the popularity of many of their pieces. They seem to promise an experience of infinity.

The softness in the musical language of Pärt and Tavener is owed to the employment of dissonance in an essentially tonal context. The intellectual and sensual hardness of much twentieth-century music is the product in part of schematic attempts to eliminate tonality, with the result that the harmony can be called atonal or polytonal. By contrast, Pärt and Tavener have constructed sound-worlds out of a medley of techniques and musical devices associated with religious music of the distant past. Tavener often uses chant-like solo writing in conjunction with full-choir music reliant on modal harmonies (as in the *Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete*). Pärt has developed a more articulated technique that he calls "tintinnabuli". He likens it to the ringing of bells. It, too, revisits the technique of plainsong composition in its melodic contours, of which the most famous examples are contained in Pärt's *Passio*. Both composers favor the use of drones (which guarantee a tonal, or even a modal, stability); and both like to repeat blocks of composition in a quasi-ritualistic way. Both tend to favor slow tempi.



ARVO PÄRT BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The aesthetic effect of this music in some respects comes close to that of authentic plainchant, and of the rather haphazardly dissonant early examples of part-writing, contained in those musical forms (called *organum* and *conductus*) which were based on improvising or composing melodic lines over a chant drone and which flourished up to the end of the twelfth century. It also has affiliations, through its tonal stability and its preference for unaccompanied or lightly accompanied voices, with every kind of church music written before the advent of expressive monody and the baroque around the year 1600. And in all these echoes with the past, this music shares the intention of creating a general mood, not a specific one. The words are not painted, though they may be very carefully set; their precise meanings are smoothed over, exalted and enshrined in sounds that almost inevitably create a quasi-religious atmosphere, a profound post-verbal sort of contemplation or ecstasy, wherever they are heard, whether they are rendered by voices or instruments.

It follows, then, that a large measure of the success of this new music runs parallel with the contemporary widespread interest in plainchant and early music, up to and including the polyphony of the Renaissance period. One thing that they all share, certainly, is the sense that normal time has been suspended for the duration of the piece. These styles of composition lack a strongly defining succession of incidents that move linearly, narratively, toward a climax, a conclusion. With many of these pieces, it would make little difference if, after the actual end, a unit or two were to be added to them.

This sensation of being lifted out of dailiness exerts a powerful attraction for many reasons: it delivers an uncomplicated relaxation, or a feeling of being taken "out of oneself," or even a sense of God, for all that the experience is non-denominational and non-liturgical. Of course, the magic does not work for everyone. The initial impressiveness of so many of these pieces—Pärt's *Passio*, for example, opens with the most gripping series of chords—can seem too attenuated by repetition, the textures too monochrome. I suspect that people for whom this is the case would not be at ease in a Russian Orthodox service: they might admire its beauty, but they would be disinclined to lose themselves in it, preferring the spiritual (and more Western) satisfactions of self-consciousness in its artistic forms.

For Pärt and Tavener, however, this atmosphere represents a fascination so

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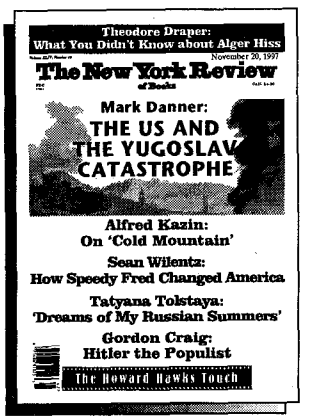

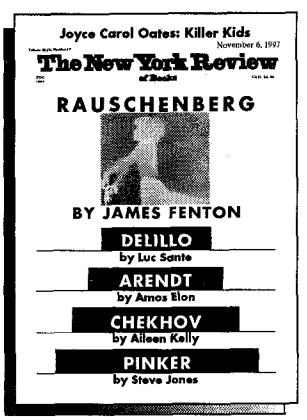

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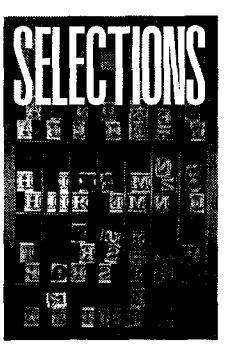

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potent that even when they are writing music of almost dangerous simplicity—for example, in two-part counterpoint—it has given them the inspiration never to sound saccharine. When, with the Tallis Scholars, I have premiered works by Tavener (the most recent being *Hymn of the Unwaning Light* this year), I have stood amazed that his style never becomes trite. The same may certainly be said of Pärt. Consider his *Litany, or Prayers of St. John Chrysostom for Each Hour of Day and Night*, written in 1994. As the subtitle suggests, this work consists of a succession of prayers, 24 in all, none of them any longer than a phrase or so, some just a few words, and all of them opening with the invocation "O Lord." In such a context it would be difficult to build up strong climaxes, though Pärt does maintain a sense of progression through the individual units, toward sections of louder music. Yet the essence of the style is based on the kind of liturgical recitative that is appropriate to prayer, and which characterized plainchant. This is a style that might easily sink into tedium, but Pärt unfailingly avoids this by a combination of beautiful melodies and the artfully contrived repetition of ideas, mostly contained in rhythms and scales. The listener may come away from such music with the impression that it is deeper than it is wide; but it is never cloying.

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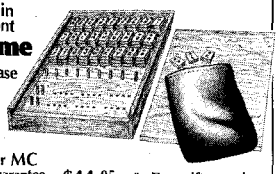

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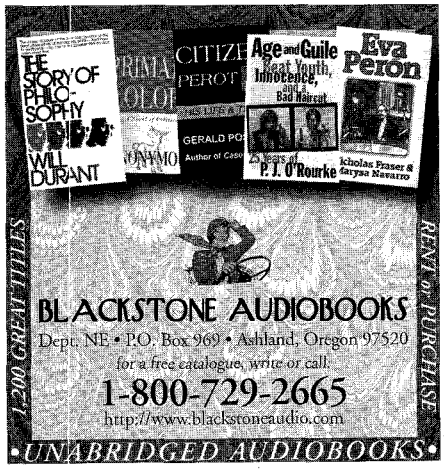

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The internal subtleties of Pärt's music, and much of the Orthodox background to his thinking, are described in a new book by Paul Hillier, who, along with the Hilliard Ensemble and The Theatre of Voices, has himself premiered several of the works under discussion. There can be few people who know the subject as intimately as Hillier. He has spent the last thirteen years talking to Pärt in detail. Hillier duly sketches in a great deal of the music's context, not just biographical but also cultural, and provides exhaustive analyses of almost all of Pärt's compositions.

Pärt was born in 1935 in Paide, a small town southeast of Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. He spent his early years in Rakvere, where he first tried to write music and learned to play the piano, which has remained his principal instrument. He was lucky that he was no older than 18 when Stalin died in 1953, and could make the most of the thaw that Estonia then experienced in the arts. In 1954 he attended the Music Middle School in Tallinn, where his teacher was Harri Olsa and where he learned piano, composition, and theory, and studied folk music. Later, in 1957, at the main Conservatory, he studied the same subjects under Heino Eller, who encouraged his students to explore the new ideas that were beginning to filter through from the West, most of them on illegal tapes.

From an early age, Pärt was held to be exceptionally talented. As one of his fellow students put it, "he just seemed to shake his sleeve and the notes would fall out." His first mature compositions show the influences of Shostakovich and Prokofiev in his piano writing, and the influence of Bartok in his String Quartet. He came increasingly to offend against the official Soviet view of what was desirable in music. The first time was in *Nekrolog* (1960-61), which began to explore serial techniques and came under strong criticism for its espousal of Western "formalism." More serious was the reaction to *Credo* (1968), for piano, chorus, and orchestra. Quite apart from the official displeasure caused by the implications of the work's title, the hounding of his music caused Pärt to have something of a breakdown, during which time he effectively ceased to compose. In 1972, he joined the Russian Orthodox Church, his health was restored, and he began to move in the direction of his "tintinnabuli." In 1980, he and his family emigrated to Vienna and then to Berlin.

Unfortunately, Hillier provides the background to Pärt's music with what amounts to a series of potted histories. Most of these are collected in the first chapter, entitled "Sounding Icons," which includes a thousand words or so on: the influence of spirituality on music of Pärt's type; the symbolism of icons; hesychasm, the contemplative core of Eastern Christian spirituality; the existential ritual; minimalism in music; and bells. (This last is the most engaging.) Later the same method is applied to plainchant and polyphony, especially that of the Notre Dame school. Some of these passages are helpful, but most of this stuff is only vaguely relevant and reads self-indulgently. Thus Hillier touches on Flathead Indians, Pseudo-Dionysius, the *filioque* controversy, Samuel Beckett, Basho, St. Gregory Palamas, Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*, Gertrude Stein, and (most instructively) Cambridge Surprise Minor, Stedman Caters, and other British peals. It is a breathless sequence, and although regularly made to relate in one way or another to Pärt's music, much of it seems forced.

For all the words that Hillier brings to bear on his theme, it is those that he quotes from Pärt himself that instantly tell the reader what he needs to know. Pärt's speech is redolent of the unusual world that he inhabits:

> A composition comes as a single gesture which is already, in essence, music. The path to this is hard; you descend to the lowest spiritual plane, the bottom of the world, not knowing what will be found. The only thing you know is that you don't know anything. If this gesture, like a seed, takes root, it must be cultivated with extreme care so that it may grow; meanwhile you are oscillating between heaven and earth. The compositional task is to find the appropriate system for the gesture. It is one's capacity for suffering that gives the energy to create.

Quite what an author is supposed to do with a subject so articulate in so individual a way is hard to prescribe. Hillier plunges in, sometimes the victim by comparison of a certain heaviness of expression. Still, Hillier makes some interesting and important observations. One of them concerns the central issue of the timelessness of time:

> A monastery may be set apart from the temporal flow of ordinary events, yet the passage of time is none the less acutely observed, traditionally with bells marking the hours and summoning the fraternity to prayer at the appropriate time of day or night. Similarly, the year's cyclic processes are marked out and ritually observed according to the liturgical calendar, duly hallowed by force of repetition. This mea-

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suring of time within timelessness (like the bells rung at sea to mark the track of time, where space stretches endlessly to the horizon's circle) provides the regulated motion, the matrix, in which the seed of the spiritual life can blossom.

Not bad. But, as his music demonstrates, there is something in Pärt's expression that reaches to the heart of the matter with the most perfect clarity and simplicity.

Hillier's information is sound enough; but when he turns to the idea, in a section labeled "Icon and Music," that "the timelessness of such music [like an icon] overrides the question of contemporaneity," the discussion becomes seriously flawed. It is not clear in the context whether chant and early music are meant by "such music," or Pärt's own, or both; but either way the argument is too simple. Pärt's aspirations to infinity notwithstanding, his music is created in a particular time and place, in a concrete historical and artistic context; and in Hillier's pious linking of "timeless" religious artistic expression and Pärt's (and Tavener's) "continuation" of a tradition, a myth is being created that needs to be carefully examined.

Clearly Pärt's relationship with early music is fundamental to this myth. Here one may repeat perhaps the most inspiring words quoted from him in Hillier's book. The subject is the invention of the technique of "tintinnabulation" that he has used, since 1976, in almost all his music. It is worth adding that the invention took several years, during which Pärt was able to write very little.

> Tintinnabulation is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers—in my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity. What is it, this one thing, and how do I find my way to it? Traces of this perfect thing appear in many guises—and everything that is unimportant falls away. Tintinnabulation is like this. Here I am alone with silence. I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me. I work with very few elements—with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials—with the triad, with one specific tonality. The three notes of the triad are like bells. And that is why I called it tintinnabulation.

The essence of tintinnabulation is explained by Hillier in great detail, and its influence meticulously followed in

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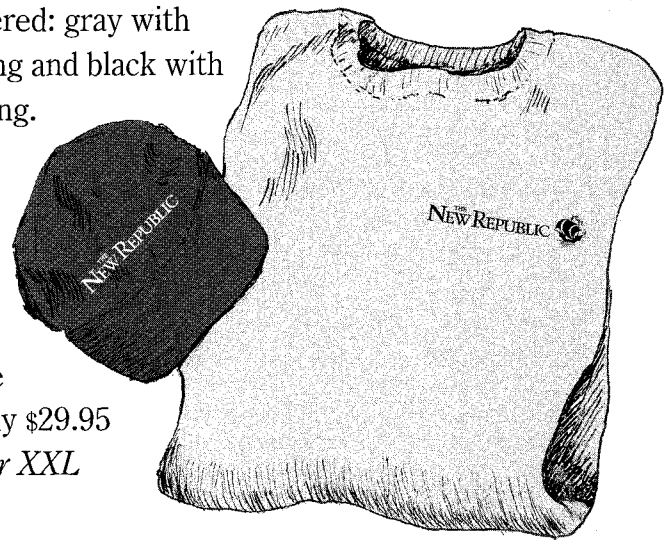

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all the music that has sprung from it. This is preceded by an analysis of the sources of tintinnabulation that are closely linked by Hillier to a study of early music and the productive coincidence that the Estonian capital spawned a first-rate early music group, Hortus Musicus, which, alongside earlier repertories, was prepared to premiere works by Pärt. Hillier describes how Pärt, at about the time of the invention of tintinnabulation, reexamined plainsong, and then slowly moved forwards through time to a consideration of Renaissance polyphony. He writes that "in the eyes (or ears) of most people, it is the influence of early music that has had the most readily discernible impact on [Pärt's] style."

But is this really so? Hillier himself goes on to note Pärt's comment that it was primarily the spirit of early music that interested him, far more than the technical procedures by which it was put together. And this qualification is reinforced after a discussion of the techniques laid down by Guido d'Arezzo, the eleventh-century music theorist, and the ninth-century *Musica Enchiriadis*, an anonymous treatise that discusses the relationship between language and music at a very early stage of its historical development: if Pärt learned from these sources "he nonetheless followed the principles in spirit rather than to the letter." Hillier sums up: "while we may infer that Pärt has taken ideas from early music, ultimately we should say that he has found a means of working with a traditional fabric not by imitation, but by picking up the thread of that earlier tradition and continuing it."

It is unacceptably vague and sentimental to say that Pärt is continuing a whole series of traditions. Which tradition, exactly, does Hillier mean? Catholic, Orthodox, Gregorian, Byzantine, chant alone, chant with polyphony, medieval polyphony, or Renaissance polyphony? And what is the "spirit" of all these things, or a mixture of some of them? Is it the same spirit in every case? Can so many diverse if linked activities be lumped together in order to say that a composer 400 years after the last of them is "continuing a tradition"? Thus, Hillier claims that the mood and the technique of Gregorian plainchant composition underlies much of what exercises Pärt; but the comparative analysis that Hillier makes between chant and Pärt's manner of word-setting has immediately to be reinforced by reference to subsequent repertoires, especially to twelfth-century *organum*, the technique by which polyphony could be improvised over a chant melody. Apart from the use of a drone, and the coincident employment of the same notation for the two, there is little apparent connection between the quoted examples of Pärt's music and the early music on which it is supposed to be based. This is just one example among many of forcing too much on Pärt's writing. The more obvious truth, for better or worse, is that Pärt's style is a style fashioned for modern use.

Of far greater importance than any of these acquired influences on the compositions of Pärt and Tavener has been the highly seductive atmosphere, musical and spiritual, of Russian Orthodox church services. It is true that the stable tonality, the desire to "reach beyond [words] to touch what they mean but cannot say," the slow-moving or even static religious, quasi-liturgical ambience could have come from any of the repertoires under discussion; but not the soft harmonies. These certainly might have been inspired by the ringing of bells, Eastern or Western; but it is just as likely that they came from the manner of musical performance in Orthodox worship as described above: notes blurring into each other in resonant acoustics, the succession of pieces running sometimes for hours. The sheer length of much of this music may be explained by this origin.

Tavener is unambiguous about this; Pärt's acknowledgement of this debt is not entirely clear from Hillier's account. But Hillier tells a story about Pärt in performance that squares exactly with Russian musical practice in church (and with my own experience of Tavener's thinking):

> I recall a workshop rehearsal which Pärt attended, at which I was preparing a student choir for a performance of his *De Profundis*. The composer assisted at the piano by supplying the pedal notes (of what is an organ part). Although the tempo was already slow he played these notes very firmly and—always more slowly. In fact no matter how slowly I took the piece, the pedal notes would always come a little later, and a little heavier! I do not imagine for a moment that Pärt intended any tempo other than that marked (crotchet=108), but this is an indication of the way in which some of Pärt's works require great weight to be poured into them.

These bass notes are what Tavener calls "incarnate" or "primordial," the latter a word that Pärt also seems to favor. Surely such an instinct with music is far from the Western tradition, especially the Western tradition of part-writing.

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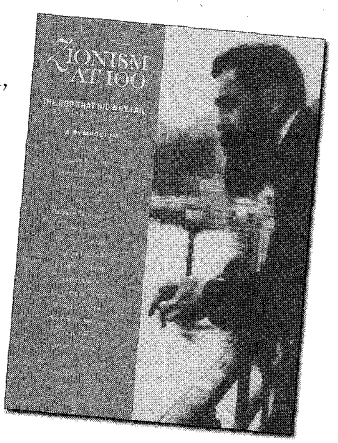

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According to the legend that now envelops Pärt and Tavener, it is not only their music that acquired a kind of timeless serenity, and even wisdom, in public opinion. The composers themselves seem to have been elevated to some sort of sainthood. But it surely takes nothing away from their achievements as artists to show that they are products of contemporary life. I recently asked Tavener what he and Pärt speak about when they meet. He replied that they always discuss the latest fast cars that they have purchased. Tavener goes for classics, such as Bentleys and Rolls Royces, while Pärt favors Porsches. Did they ever discuss music? Never; but after a long pause he added that Pärt was writing for a liturgy that never existed, whereas he, Tavener, always had the Orthodox liturgy in mind. In fact, both Pärt and Tavener rely almost entirely on concerts, not on church services, for performances of their music, very often in secular places. The Orthodox church has traditionally shown very little interest in art music of this kind, at least in worship, a fact that places all these endeavors firmly in their present-day context.

Insofar as Pärt's holy minimalism encourages us to suspend our logical minds and put away our daily concerns, Hillier is able to conclude that Pärt and composers like him have rejuvenated the world of "art" music in recent years. He goes on to say that "this pattern of events should not be dismissed as mere fashion, as it clearly answers a strong need in many people." But that is precisely what every fashion does! To suggest that this music is beyond fashion is tantamount to saying, in a second way, that it stands outside time. Whether it be Porsches, Bentleys, monkish habits, gnomic observations, Byzantine chant or Gregorian chant, the one thing which is certain about this music is that it is *not* outside time.

Throughout this century, composers have methodically and often heartlessly rejected what they inherited from the past. Serialism has long been held to be insufficiently expressive and without spirituality; and in this context, holy minimalism, even more than the plain minimalism of Reich or Glass, seems like the obvious antidote. It is not necessarily the worse for being obvious. But it is, if anything, too much of its time, too naïve to last. The cravings of the spirit are never finally and completely sated. I await the next fashion, spiritual and musical, with some impatience.

PETER PHILLIPS is the director of the Tallis Scholars and the publisher of the *Musical Times*.

TRB *continued from page 6*

the imprecision of the federal list led Drew Days, the former solicitor general for the Clinton administration, to confess that the 8(a) program was constitutionally vulnerable, long before *Adarand* changed the constitutional landscape, and before the Clinton administration proposed to make things worse by expanding set-asides for white women. When asked for evidence of discrimination in federal procurement, Lee replied that minority-owned businesses "continue to be underutilized in federal procurement programs," a claim that is untrue for many groups on the list.

But this tired argument is consistent with Lee's general ambivalence about the requirement that discrimination must be intentional to be unconstitutional: in *Plyler* v. *Doe*, a 1982 Supreme Court case, he filed a brief challenging the exclusion of the children of undocumented aliens from public schools in Texas, not because the sins of fathers shouldn't be visited on children, but because the Texas initiative had a "discriminatory impact" on the children of Asians and Mexicans.

By nominating an unreconstructed civil-rights activist, President Clinton has permitted the Republicans to continue dodging the hard issues in the debate about race. Many principled defenders of color blindness are increasingly uncomfortable with its practical consequences, such as the virtual evaporation of the pool of black students who can be admitted to UCLA and Berkeley law schools. By attacking Lee's extremism, the Republicans can divert attention from their own.

There is, however, a middle ground on civil rights; and perhaps it looks something like the position sketched by former Solicitor General Walter Dellinger in his brief for the Clinton administration in the New Jersey affirmative-action case that the Supreme Court will hear in January. Race-based firing is impermissible, Dellinger argued, because its burdens are too intrusive. But nonremedial racial preferences may be permissible in very limited circumstances, such as public university admissions and inner-city police assignments, where the burdens are diffuse and the social benefits are compelling. But to stake out his middle ground, Dellinger had to fight the strenuous objections of Deval Patrick, the outgoing civil-rights chief, whose uncompromising racialism did much to harm the liberal cause. By refusing to confirm Bill Lann Lee, Senate Republicans have given President Clinton one last chance to avoid repeating this mistake.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

A broken chain

AT FIRST YOU COULDN'T TELL there was anything wrong: Dylan's hair was brown and straight like mine, his skin slightly olive like his mother's. In retrospect, though, I guess there were some subtle signs, even if, in our excitement, we didn't notice them. His hair, for instance, was a bit too long for a newborn, his eyelashes unusually thick. "He's mangy like you were," my wife said jokingly. After we took Dylan home from the hospital, we'd often sit with him in the rocking chair and gaze proudly at him, as all new parents do. But other, more unmistakable signs soon developed. He had what the pediatrician called "failure to thrive"—an indirect way of saying he couldn't hold down his food. The doctor opened Dylan's mouth and announced that his palate was too arched; I ran my tongue along my own palate, as if I could push Dylan's back into shape. On the doctor's orders, we fed Dylan Nutramigen, a special formula consisting of artificially predigested proteins; but that, too, came up. Finally, there were too many problems—his skin became dry and irritated, his weight shrivelled. It was clear, even to us, that something was wrong.

THE GENETICIST'S OFFICE WAS cluttered with books. I wasn't sure if this was good or bad: did he know a lot or not enough? He stared at Dylan, his thick beard scratching Dylan's skin. After several pokes and prods, he said he thought Dylan looked okay. I listened for the word "normal," as if it possessed some secret cure unto itself. But the doctor, still poking and prodding, took a vial of blood, just to be sure everything *was* normal. Several weeks later, he phoned my wife. Dylan, he said coolly, was missing part of his Y chromosome.

ON MY WAY HOME FROM WORK that day, I stopped at the library. I pulled out several books on chromosomes and DNA, none of which I much understood. One noted that a woman has 22 pairs of chromosomes, plus two X chromosomes, while a man has 22 pairs, plus an X and a Y. Another said that when male mice lose their Y chromosome cluster, they don't produce sperm. The next day I called the geneticist. He now revealed that Dylan was also missing the end of the long arm of chromosome 18, a piece of genetic material consisting of several hundred genes. This anomaly produces a series of defects referred to collectively as 18q- Syndrome. What this signified, he said, is that Dylan would be mentally retarded (with an IQ ranging from five to 88), and relatively short in stature (under five feet). The good news, he said, was that Dylan could live a normal life span. He then hung up the phone, as if he were closing a textbook.

WHAT WE DID NEXT, I SUSPECT, IS what anyone else in the same situation would do: try to find a second doctor to disprove the first. This geneticist turned out to be a sweet woman, with her own children's crayon drawings on the walls. Yet she wouldn't contradict the first. "Your son may never walk or talk," she told us, "and the two of you should begin to prepare yourselves for that possibility." Leafing through photographs of children with splayed legs and deformed faces, she said: "This is what your son will look like."

TODAY, SEVEN YEARS LATER, DYLAN doesn't look much like the kids in those photos. The indications are more muted: he puts his shirt on backwards, his gait is unsteady. When he talks, his speech is slow and often incomprehensible. But those signs no longer seem so extraordinary to his mother or to me. They are not only part of him, they are him. And based on what I've learned about other kids with 18q- Syndrome, I feel fortunate. Dylan began to walk at the age of two; he learned to read as quickly as most kids. Aside from needing several surgeries to correct an eye muscle problem, and gradually losing his hearing, Dylan has remained relatively healthy.

BECAUSE OF DYLAN, WE HAVE ENtered a new world—a world of science and support groups and special schools. One of the groups we have become deeply involved in is the Chromosome 18 Registry & Research Society, founded in 1990 by Jannine Cody, who has a daughter with the same syndrome as Dylan's. She wanted answers to questions that neither her doctors nor anyone else could provide. At the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, where Jannine is a post-doctoral fellow, scientists have conducted research into a gene called myelin basic protein, which is located near the end of the long arm of chromosome 18 and is part of what my son is missing. Myelin acts as a protective membrane that wraps around axons in the central nervous system, allowing nerve impulses to travel to the brain up to ten times faster than they do when axons are not myelinated. Without the MBP gene, normal brain myelination does not occur. But human growth hormone, it now seems, helps produce myelin. Researchers also know that many people with 18q- Syndrome are incapable of producing enough growth hormone on their own. So they are investigating whether daily injections of synthetic growth hormone not only benefit 18q- Syndrome children physically—by improving their short stature and substandard weight—but also mentally. Some children involved in the studies so far have exhibited dramatic improvements—perhaps due to improved myelination caused by growth-hormone therapy. Sadly, though, this promising research has stalled due to insufficient funding. And unless tests show that a person produces a certain extremely low level of growth hormone, insurance companies will not pay for the costly growth-hormone therapy.

I HAVE NEVER CONSIDERED MYSELF either political or a writer, even though I've worked in the production department of THE NEW REPUBLIC for nearly thirteen years. Yet Dylan has transformed me into something of an activist. I now find myself raising money for research and writing elected county officials to insure Dylan's placement in the mainstream public school system, as opposed to simply allowing him to be isolated in "special" classes. I've even created a Web page (http://members.aol.com/chrom18) and implemented a modest fund-raising tactic at the office—a candy machine, the proceeds of which go to research.

LIFE WITH DYLAN IS NOT ALWAYS quite the way I had pictured fatherhood. I never thought I'd be toilet training my son as he entered kindergarten, or force feeding him Hostess Ho-Ho's to keep his weight up. But, in many ways, things have taken on their own strange sort of beauty. Last month I took Dylan to play in his final game of the Little League "Challengers" baseball season. We walked to the plate together, looking out at the infield where other kids waited in wheelchairs. Dylan placed the ball on the tee, reached back, took a deep breath, and dribbled a grounder in front of home plate. As we ran around the diamond, with me gently guiding him from base to base, I could not imagine my family any other way.

BRUCE STEINKE

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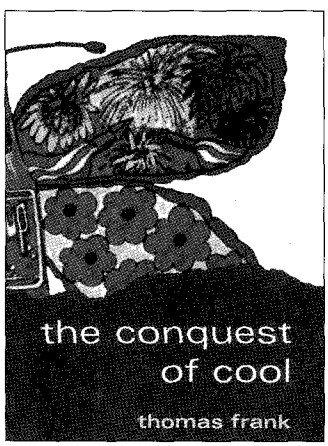

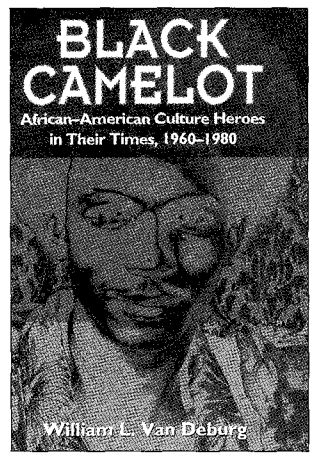

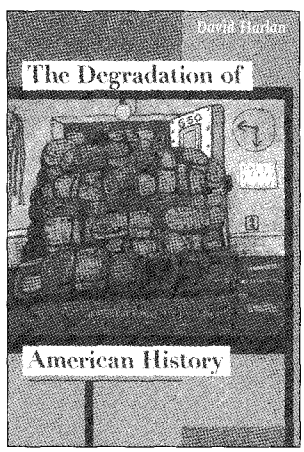

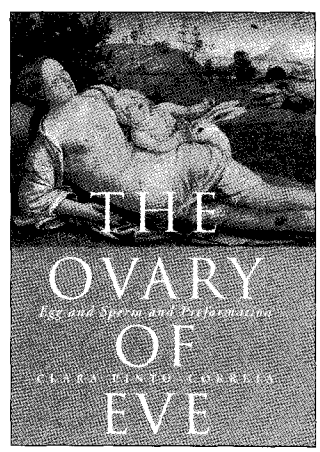

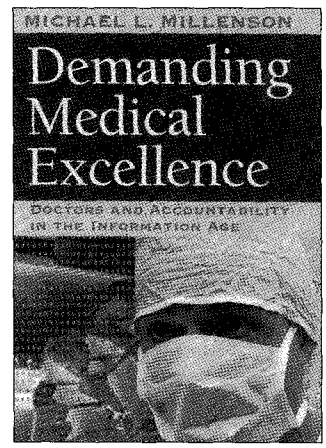

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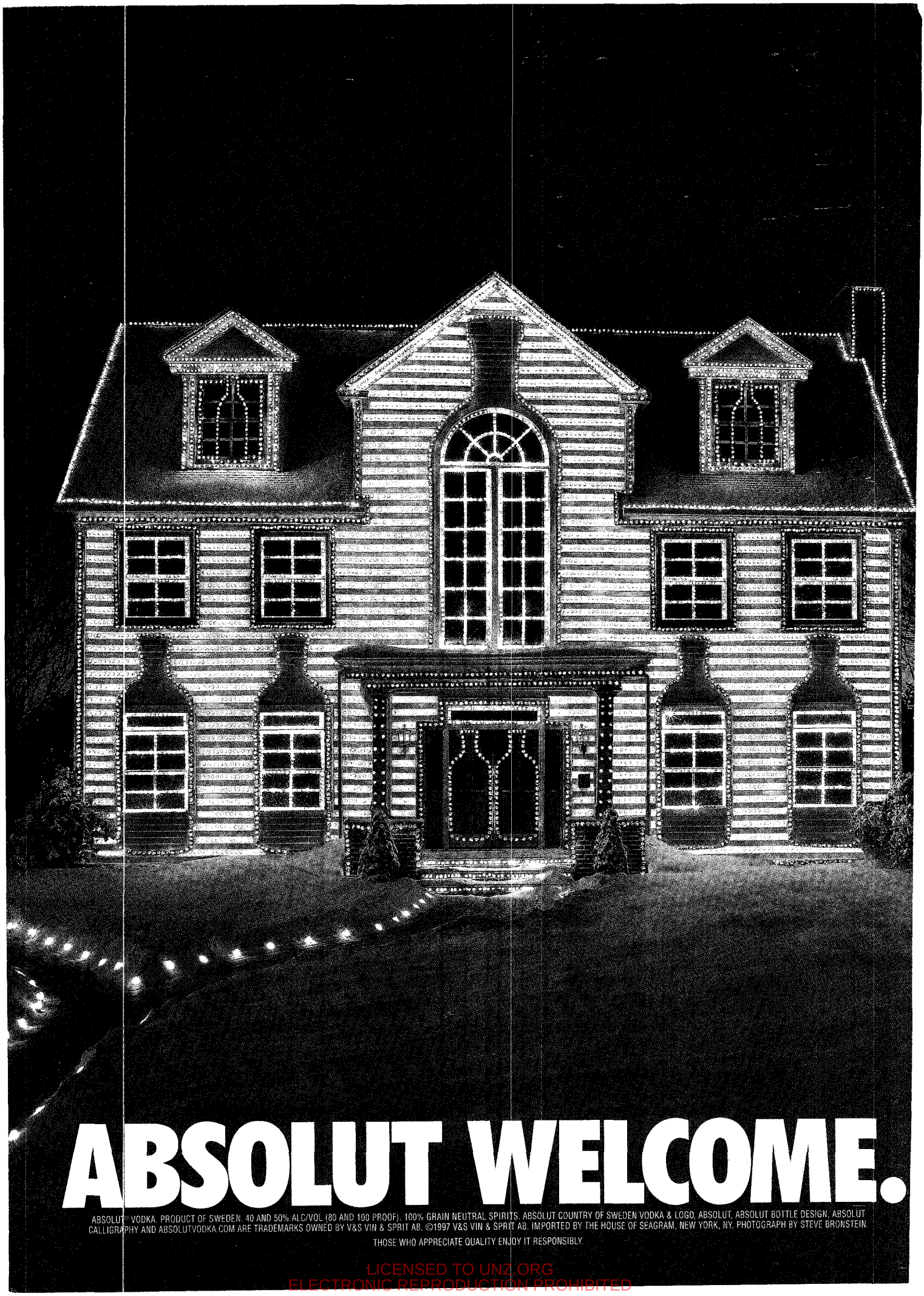

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